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'Living in the gun mouth' : race, class, and political violence in Guyana

Argues that whatever racial antipathies exist in Guyana today are not the same of those of the 1960s. The author reviews the 'racial violence' of the 1950s and 1960s. He concludes that the politics of that era was a complex process in which many elements were involved and not simply the outcome of racial antagonism or the reassertion of colonial hegemonic values.

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**"LIVING IN THE GUN MOUTH" : RACE, CLASS, AND  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN GUYANA**

[T]he history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of the nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so ... all historians, whatever else their objectives, are engaged in this process inasmuch as they contribute, consciously or not, to the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past which belong not only to the world of specialist investigation but to the public sphere of man as a political being.

(Eric Hobsbawm 1983:13)

Early in 1975 I visited a village in Guyana where I had lived for the whole of 1956. As I walked along what is rather grandly named "Main Street," an old man greeted me and we exchanged a few words before I moved on. The incident was hardly noteworthy, but one phrase, repeated several times – half anguished and half defiant – has remained clearly in my mind. He said, "Doc, we are living in the gun mouth here; living in the gun mouth." The phrase conjured up images of cannon and siege, even perhaps a war of attrition carried on by armies arrayed against each other and securely dug in for the long haul. But there was no visible warfare; no cannons; no smell of cordite or landscape of ruin. This apparently peaceful village of rice farmers showed definite signs of increased prosperity compared to 1956, with some splendid new houses and a vast proliferation of tractors and agricultural machinery.<sup>1</sup> However, it was very noticeable that almost all of the 250 Afro-Guyanese who had lived peacefully in this predominantly East Indian village for many, many years, were gone. Both the dramatic image of living "in the gun mouth," and the disappearance of the

Africans, had their origin in the events of the 1960s during a period of what is usually called "racial violence."

In a piece of inspired anticipation Brackette Williams begins her 1991 book on Guyana with a long reference to the problems of Serb-Croat relations in Yugoslavia. At the time she chose that opening there was little indication that the state of Yugoslavia was likely to disintegrate in the immediate future, nor of the eventual virulence of the "ethnic cleansing" that has accompanied that disintegration. Nor, I am sure, did she intend her discussion of Serbs and Croats to suggest any such radical *dénouement* for Guyana. However, Guyana experienced something of that particular sickness for a short time in the early 1960s; there was expulsion of minorities from rural communities, beatings and killings, and even proposals for dismantling the state and creating two "ethnic nations," African and East Indian. What began as a vague suggestion by some members of the Afro-Guyanese elite in the early 1960s was taken up and formalized as a proposal of The Society for Racial Equality and is still discussed by Guyanese inside and outside the country.<sup>2</sup>

In 1953 the then colony of British Guiana had its first elections under a new constitution intended as a first step toward independence. A socialist party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan, an Indian dentist, and Forbes Burnham, an African barrister, won handily and took office. One hundred and thirty-three days later the British Government announced that the constitution was suspended because of "communist subversion." In 1955 the party split into two factions and in 1957 Burnham formed the People's National Congress (PNC) leaving Jagan as leader of a depleted PPP. After 1957 the contest between these two parties was increasingly couched in terms of a struggle between Africans, represented by Burnham and the PNC, and Indians, represented by Jagan and the PPP. This was the background to the "racial violence" to which I referred earlier. From December 1964 to October of 1992, Guyana was governed by the PNC as a virtual, and occasionally as a nominal, one-party state, effectively containing, but not eradicating, the conflicts and resentments that had been expressed during those years of violent confrontation between Indians and Africans. Now that the PPP is back in office after the first reasonably free elections in 28 years the configuration of forces appears to be remarkably similar to that in the 1960s.

The People's Progressive Party continues to find its main electoral support among Indo-Guyanese voters, and the People's National Congress is still regarded as the vehicle of Afro-Guyanese interests. If the causes of the violence of 1962, 1963, and 1964 was an upsurge of racial antipathy rooted in primordial identities and expressing itself in the struggle

over political power, then it is logical to assume that the very same racism will assert itself once again. We have grown used to assuming that racial and ethnic conflict is inevitable – even natural – and in the world-wide scale of violent conflicts Guyana is hardly worth more than a passing mention. In this paper I argue that whatever racial antipathies exist in Guyana today are not the same as those of the 1960s; that the recasting of the politics of the 1960s in terms of racial antagonism was not an automatic reversion to “primordial identities,” or even the reassertion of colonial hegemonic values, but a complex process in which many elements were involved, and in which even social scientists played a part. As such it raises interesting questions about how we choose to interpret political conflicts, about the images we adopt when we formulate research problems, and the way in which research becomes entangled in political processes.

Questions of race, ethnicity, and cultural pluralism are already the stuff of academic analyses of Guyana's ills, and those analyses are – and have long been – themselves a part of the political process in that unfortunate country, contributing not a little to the shape it has taken. Practically all of those writing about Guyana, and I include myself, invoke history, more or less explicitly, to enable understanding of the events with which we deal. Unfortunately the “history” is often of the most general kind, purporting to establish the root causes of present-day divisions and antagonisms in the society. Thus Clive Y. Thomas (1984:83) has identified “racial disunity” as hampering the “objective unity” of the Guyanese working class; he attributes it to the introduction of indentured immigrants after the abolition of slavery and the process that “created a functional basis in the division of labor among the two ethnic groups of sugar workers [Africans in the factory and Indians in the field], and later generated two distinct areas of settlement near to each estate: the so-called African and Indian villages.”<sup>3</sup>

Brackette Williams has shown in convincing detail how the contradictory ideologies of egalitarianism and hierarchy operate in social practice in the daily life of Guyanese, and I cannot praise too highly the quality of her analysis and the depth of her understanding of the process of cultural struggle in the everyday life of that country. However, her discussion of the way in which the various “racial/ethnic groups” were incorporated into the hierarchical structure of colonial society refers once again to a generally familiar image of historical development.<sup>4</sup> How did the hierarchy of apparently specialized positions come to be accepted by all the participants? She contends that:



formal policies and informal practices of both the dominating Anglo-European elite and the subordinated diverse elements of the non-elite population combines to form a framework of objective and ideological constraints within which the racial/ethnic groups developed different adaptive strategies for subsistence and social mobility (Williams 1991: 148).

This is a familiar argument, used to explain how the image of the "Land of Six Peoples," each with their special functions to fulfil, came to exist in the first place, as well as the supposed actual distribution of "races" through the occupational system. Demurring slightly from Lee Drummond's argument (1974:51) that the stereotypes of "racial/ethnic" types become detached from any specific material processes, Williams (1991:152) contends that this break is possible only because the stereotypes themselves were originally "tightly tied to the production of groups, of group identities, and of patterns of conduct among members of these groups"; subsequently the stereotypes were explained in terms of "blood," or race itself. I do not contest the accuracy of her historical material, but does it follow, as she asserts, that the relations among the subordinated non-European groups during the establishment of Anglo-European dominance "set the terms of the politics of cultural struggle in contemporary Guyana" (Williams 1991: 154), implying that the politics of cultural struggle have been shaped by those very terms over a long period of time?

Finally, it has been the constant refrain of so-called plural society theorists that Guyana is made up of sections that differ fundamentally in culture, and that whatever fragile unity exists is made possible only by the dominance of one superordinate section. Thus M.G. Smith (1984:110-11) contends that the unified independence movement of the early 1950s inevitably disintegrated,

[S]ince, in addition to differences of race, colour, ecology, social organisation, historical experience, religion and the like, the two segments [Creole and East Indian] were anchored in very different cultures and kinds of social structure, and accordingly differed profoundly in their economic needs and interests, even though their members seemed superficially to belong to such common inclusive classes as the "peasantry" or "proletariat". In other words, the unity forged by Jagan and Burnham in 1953 was more superficial and illusory than it seemed; and so were the prospects of Indian assimilation, Guyanese integration and modernization.

The implication of all these invocations of Guyana's past is that it would take a major revolution to render that past neutral – or at least less potent – in shaping the present. Without conceding the potency of that imagined

past I want to argue, as I have previously, that a revolution of sorts was in process of being made. As Clifford Geertz (1971:362) observed some years ago,

The men who raised this challenge [of creating a proper "nationality" in the modern manner], the nationalist intellectuals, were ... launching a revolution as much cultural, even epistemological, as it was political.

In British Guiana that revolution was stopped dead in its tracks by outside agents working upon the very forces that nationalism was striving to overcome. Discussion of this period cannot be divorced from questions of value and of international politics, nor can it ignore the important part played by the nationalist intellectuals and the manner in which they shaped and trimmed the ideologies through which the struggle for power was conducted. However, I do not suppose that one can attain a complete understanding of the process of social transformation by concentrating solely upon the macro-structures of the state and its articulation with cold war politics. Although I begin with a brief recounting of the background to, and the nature of, the so-called racial violence of the 1960s, it is important to ask how and why the general populace responded in that particular way to the actions of national leaders and their patrons in London or in Washington, Havana or Moscow, and how social scientists have chosen to interpret those events.

#### BACKGROUND TO "RACIAL VIOLENCE"

When I arrived in British Guiana in May of 1951, I entered a society where Anglo-European hegemony was not yet ghostly, to use Brackette Williams's image, but very much alive. Queen Victoria's birthday was still celebrated as "Empire Day" on May 24 with a school holiday, free cakes and drinks for schoolchildren, a message from the monarch, and a parade in the capital, led by the Governor and Colonial Secretary on horseback. These ritual spectacles of Empire did not neutralize the pervasive discontent and opposition to colonial rule that had been growing for many years and had been given additional impetus by other theatrical events over the previous decade.

The visits of a series of investigators and royal commissions appointed to make recommendations for alleviating economic distress and countering the violent protests that had swept through the region during the late 1930s were the occasion of intense public interest: in January and February of 1939, the West India Royal Commission led by Lord Moyne held

public hearings in Georgetown. The proceedings were relayed from the hearing chamber to a large public gathering on Bourda Green. Both the sugar industry and the British administration were harshly criticized by a stream of witnesses ranging from clergymen (most of them either British or Canadian) to trade unionists, professionals of all kinds, politicians, leaders of voluntary associations, and representatives of both the East Indian Association and the Negro Progress Convention. The memoranda submitted to the Commission by the various bodies are a rich source of information on discontent, but also on the nature of racial stereotypes. Thus, the East Indian Association stated unequivocally that East Indians did not wish to lose their racial and religious identity, preferring to retain contact with Mother India, though willing to work with others for the social and economic betterment of the country. The Sugar Producer's Association (the focal point of white economic power) submitted a memorandum that described the African Guyanese sugar worker as "essentially a gay, emotional person, fatalistic in his attitude to life, and as a rule taking no thought for tomorrow. His main requirements" they said "are food, shelter, bright and attractive clothing, a little spare money for rum and gambling, and the opportunity for easy love making" (Chase 1964:94). A young journalist who covered the hearings wrote subsequently, "it all added up to laying bare in all its nakedness the social history and present plight of a deprived people" (Drayton n.d.:21). Sir Walter Citrine, the British trade unionist who was a member of the Commission, felt it necessary to try to neutralize the frequent allegations that disturbances and discontent had stemmed from "communist subversion," a formula that was to play a crucial part in the events of 1953.

The recommendations of the West India Commission were radical and far-reaching, at least within the possibilities of a colonial order as exploitative as that of Britain, and a whole apparatus of "development and welfare" was set up. Political theatrics continued in British Guiana with the visit of the Constitutional Commission that arrived in December of 1950 and departed in mid-February 1951, bringing political issues into the forefront of social consciousness once more. There was another parade of witnesses in a series of public hearings, and once again the opportunity existed for the airing of racist sentiments. Such sentiments were rarely expressed but the Commission was moved to observe that while the Indian population had previously been inclined to "resist assimilation" it now had come to a "realisation of their permanent place in Guianese life and to a demand for equal participation in it," a challenge that "has stimulated the other races into closing their ranks" (British Guiana Constitutional Commission 1951:14). They continued:

Race is a patent difference and is a powerful slogan ready to the hand of unscrupulous men who can use it as a stepping stone to political power ... We do not, however, wish it to be thought that life in British Guiana is dominated by racial tension, or that there are not many heartening signs of the development of a genuine Guianese outlook ... We were ... impressed by the amity with which peoples of all races live side by side in the villages, where mutual dependence is, of necessity, recognised. It was reassuring to find that racialism spoke with a hesitant voice in public, and that virtually no proposals for communal representation were made to us (British Guiana Constitutional Commission 1951:14-15).

The Commission recommended a constitution for British Guiana that established universal adult suffrage to elect a legislature from which a majority of the executive would be drawn. The details of the constitutional arrangements are not important (details may be found in the report of Constitutional Commission, or in R.T. Smith 1980); suffice it to say that these reports, along with the rising tide of expectations throughout the British colonies, stimulated an enormous interest in the coming elections scheduled for the spring of 1953.

In the period immediately before the elections of 1953 there was considerable dissension within the People's Progressive Party over the wisdom of adopting an extremely radical left-wing posture. The local newspapers, and particularly the *Daily Argosy* (a vehicle for official and big business interests), maintained a persistent barrage of criticism against the communist leanings of the PPP. Several of the early supporters of the party left because of their embarrassment over the tone of the PPP party organ, *Thunder* and it so happened that the majority of them were Afro-Guyanese. This does not mean that all the party "radicals" were Indo-Guyanese; among the most militant were Africans, Chinese, and persons who would have been classified as "Mixed" or "Coloured." However, Burnham had the largest popular following, especially in Georgetown where he was an active trade union organizer. Although he was urged by many of his friends to leave the party, he refused because, as he frequently said, it was important to maintain the party as a genuinely multi-racial vehicle for political reform. The most vociferous opponents of the PPP were actually Indo-Guyanese, and Jagan (1966:Chapter VII) has provided a very full, and generally reliable, account of the configuration of parties and factions, including their use of racial appeals, during the campaign leading up to the elections of 1953. He has also described the week of crisis following the electoral victory of the PPP, a week during which there was intense rivalry between Jagan (1966:137-9) and Burnham over the distribution of ministries and nominations for the positions of State Councillor. Unfortunately there is no comparable written account by Burnham.

During the 133 days that the original PPP held office, there is no record of conflict among the party leadership, which is not to say that it did not exist. The parliamentary group provided a common front against the governor, Sir Alfred Savage, and in favor of a number of measures that were later referred to as evidence of a communist plot to subvert the constitution (see British Guiana Constitutional Commission 1954; Jagan 1966; Henfrey 1972; R.T. Smith 1980). When the constitution was suspended on October 9, 1953, Burnham and Jagan went together to London to brief the Parliamentary Labour Party leaders, just as a collection of Guianese opponents of the PPP rushed off to consult with the British government, then led by the Conservative Party under Winston Churchill. They subsequently went on an extended tour of Europe and India together, but without winning the enthusiastic support of the Indian government. In the editorial Introduction to a collection of Burnham's speeches, clearly written with Burnham's approval, the editors say:

Before the restrictions, Burnham travelled to England with Jagan to protest the British decision [to suspend the constitution]. He knew, however, that Jagan's devotion to the communist cause transcended his commitment to his own country. As a nationalist, Burnham was already questioning in his own mind the wisdom of continuing his alliance with Jagan ... By the time they had returned to Guiana, Burnham had made up his mind to part company with Jagan unless the latter was prepared to put Guianese nationalism above posturing as an international communist (Burnham 1970:xix).

Whatever the historical accuracy of this statement it is clear that Burnham carefully positioned himself as a moderate against Jagan's radicalism, and the 1954 commission reporting on the causes of the suspension of the constitution identified Burnham as "the leader of the socialists in the Party" as against Jagan and five others who were "enthusiastic supporters of the policies and practices of modern communist movements and were contemptuous of the European social democratic parties, including the British Labour Party" (quoted in Jagan 1966:199-200). The events of the period between the elections of 1953 and the attainment of independence in 1966 have been detailed in a number of publications so that I shall present here only the most schematic account.<sup>5</sup>

In 1955 Burnham attempted to seize control of the PPP from Jagan but merely succeeded in splitting the party leadership into two factions. Burnham's editors laconically report that "Burnham defeated Jagan for the party's leadership at internal party elections" (Burnham 1970:xx), whereas Jagan has a complex ten-page discussion of the events, claiming that Burnham had engineered an illegal party congress, packed with his

supporters. Jagan and his supporters walked out of the meeting, which proceeded to replace Jagan with Burnham as Leader of the party and demote the most militant of Jagan's supporters to minor positions in the leadership. The details are not particularly relevant to an understanding of the fact that these manoeuvres were designed to reduce the influence of the "extremists" and enhance Burnham's position in the eyes of the British and the United States. It paralleled the 1952 expulsion of the "radicals" from the Jamaican People's National Party. Burnham was perfectly well aware that the split in the party could encourage racial polarization, and in that respect it was quite different from Jamaica. Indeed he warned against such a development in an article published in his faction's edition of *Thunder* (Burnham 1970:7-8).

The first election to be held under a revised constitution, with limited powers assigned to the elected representatives, was held in August of 1957; both factions of the PPP contested the elections, along with a number of smaller parties. When the results were announced the Jagan faction had won nine of the fourteen seats, the Burnham faction three seats, and two other, anti-communist parties, one seat each. Following these elections Burnham absorbed the more conservative, and predominantly African, United Democratic Party, forming a new party under the name People's National Congress. This could be interpreted as a further move to the right on Burnham's part but it also consolidated the racial basis of his support. The next step forward in the resumption of progress toward political independence for British Guiana came with the elections of August 1961 that were widely accepted to be the prelude to the negotiation of independence. Political forces had been concentrated by this time into just three significant parties. Apart from the PNC and the PPP, a new party had appeared under the label United Force (UF). Under the leadership of a successful Guianese businessman, Peter D'Aguiar, it absorbed most of the extreme anti-communist forces. By this time there was a general recognition that a coalition government would be best for the country, since the support of the principal parties was now divided along lines that coincided with both urban-rural divisions and race, but all attempts to effect a reconciliation between Jagan and Burnham failed. For all the declarations of the various leaders, they increasingly had to cater to the interests of constituencies that were perceived to be racial. However, the rhetoric of the campaigns concentrated on other issues, with the UF taking a strongly anti-communist line against the PPP, and Burnham attacking the PPP as extremist, in the hope that the fear of communism would sway the rural Indian farmers, rice millers and shopkeepers. In the event the PPP won twenty of the thirty-five seats, while the PNC won

eleven and the United Force four. Jagan was named Premier and the stage seemed set for a rapid move to independence, especially as Burnham had been vociferous in declaring that he would press for immediate independence no matter which party won a majority of seats. In fact, the victory of the PPP in the 1961 elections was the prelude to a prolonged campaign of destabilization aimed at removing Jagan and the PPP from control of the country.

Large sums of money were poured into the country from the United States to support activities aimed at toppling Jagan's government, activities ranging from the financing of religious, newspaper and magazine campaigns to the organizing of strikes and disturbances. In a speech delivered on November 5, 1961 to the Annual Congress of the PNC, Burnham outlined his strategy for political action in the wake of the PPP victory. He began by making a case for proportional representation on the grounds that the PPP had won 20 seats in the Legislative Assembly with 93,000 votes or 42.6 percent of the votes cast, while the PNC with 89,000 or 41 percent had gained only 11 seats, and the United Force with 16.3 percent of the votes cast had won only 4 seats. He observed that "the PPP regardless of what its leaders may say or think, represents to its adherents and supporters as well as to their opponents an Indian racial victory" (Burnham 1970:15), and went on to say that "the People's Progressive Party is not to be retained, but contained and repelled" by the PNC.

Joining increasingly with D'Aguiar and the UF, Burnham launched an unrelenting attack on every proposal made by the PPP government, fomenting demonstrations and strikes that led to arson, violence, and various forms of civil disobedience. Unable to contain the unrest with the police resources available, Jagan was forced to ask the British to send troops to restore order. At the same time, he attempted to break the strikes by depending upon Cuba to supply gasoline and to provide a market for Guyana's rice. There is no doubt that Jagan moved closer to the USSR and its satellites as the United States and Britain became firmer in their resolve to remove him. And they saw the opportunity in the imposition of proportional representation that permitted a coalition of the PNC and the UF to assume office following the 1964 general election. Treating the whole country as one constituency, the PPP secured 109,332 votes, the PNC 96,567, the UF 26,612, and four minor parties gained only 2,929 among them. The PPP was awarded 24 seats, the PNC 22, and the UF 7 seats, giving the PNC-UF coalition a majority of five, enough to justify the British Governor in asking them to form a government. From that point forward the United States threw its support behind Burnham, who quickly cast off his dependence on the UF, seized control of the state apparatus,

and ensured that future elections would produce favorable results for him and his party.<sup>6</sup> As Arthur Schlesinger (1967:713) wrote in his account of the Kennedy administration, "With much unhappiness and turbulence British Guiana seemed to have passed safely out of the communist orbit."

The struggles of these political leaders over control of the state and its organs has to be seen in the context of global forces of economic and political domination. They shaped their ideologies, strategies, and tactics in accordance with their perception of what was possible in the world arena. But what enabled them to carry along their supporters? The White Paper published by the United Kingdom Government on October 20, 1953, setting out the reasons for the suspension of the constitution, included among its allegations the charge that the original People's Progressive Party had attempted to impose a totalitarian form of government that included the "organization of small cells for recruitment and indoctrination" (British Guiana Suspension of the Constitution 1953:11). If this had been true it would have been an extremely interesting development, but when one looks at the situation from the bottom up, so to speak, the perspective is quite different.

#### LOCAL AND NATIONAL HIERARCHIES

Such a perspective is suggested by a number of different developments in anthropology. The growing influence of Foucault (already on the wane in some places), the appeal of Gramsci's writings (1971:12) on ideology and the importance of the hegemonic force of civil society as opposed to direct domination by the state and its coercive power; and the burgeoning literature on resistance and subaltern studies all direct attention to the articulation of power that is diffused throughout the lower levels of complex societies. In a recent paper, Diane Austin-Broos (1992:294-95) has suggested that the tendency to identify the

political ... in terms of nationalist or class-based movements responsive to colonialism or neo-colonialism, and [to use] the "cultural" ... to denote all those other modes of practice and imagery that are not especially concerned with the domain of the state

is a mistake that neglects the importance of a "politics of moral order" that is in no way subservient "to the logic of a politics of state." Her specific analysis of Jamaican Pentecostalism has limited application to Guyana, but it converges nicely with Brackette Williams's (1991:29) admonition that:



Rather than insisting on class analysis, if our interest is in disclosing how inequalities stemming from objective conditions are exacerbated or left unremedied by nationalist ideologies and ethnic reactions, we must provide detailed accounts of how ideological fields operate to sustain the pragmatic subordination and the divisive intents of a diverse population.

And by the same token those detailed accounts will show how politics are carried forward in diverse domains. Instead of asking how a society-wide system of classes is represented at the level of local communities one can ask more profitably how systems of power are represented or contested there, and how they articulate with class and status groups in a wider structure of inequality.

Paying attention to the micro-processes of status contestation fits with a reconsideration of Max Weber's work on class, status, and power. The standard interpretation of Weber is that he took Marx's concept of class and decomposed it into class, status, and power. Every sociology student learns the simple definitions of these concepts, derived, usually, from the inadequate translations by Gerth and Mills (Weber 1946). To reduce economic, prestige, and power considerations to "variables" not only does violence to Weber's intentions, but fails to grasp the complex interpenetration of these abstracted elements. Weber used a number of different concepts that are usually all translated as "social stratification." His preferred term was *Gliederung*, meaning articulation or structure, with articulation being much closer to Weber's intention than stratification, and more useful as an image of class/status distribution. I rely here upon Daniel Wolk's (1994) recent reconsideration of Weber's work that has uncovered shortcomings in the translations of Weber's texts, leading to serious distortions of his intentions. Weber's concepts of class situation and status situation are still most useful for mapping the terrain of structures of inequality; that is, the pattern of distribution of class and status that defines a structure or order of inequality. However, they demand consideration "from the bottom up."

The patterns of distribution of the material and symbolic conditions of life among groups, and categories of individuals, define their situations of both class and *Stand*, or status group. Social scientists have generally interpreted Weber to mean that social class and social honor can be measured as the attributes of individuals which can then be aggregated to reveal the structures of inequality. This oversimplifies a complex and subtle argument, as Wolk demonstrates.

Weber regarded *Stand* – honor or prestige – as the decisive distributive element in a social order, but he recognized that it applies to *groups*, and not to individuals. This is why style of life (*Lebensführung*) is such an

important element in the self-characterization of groups; these styles of life are in competition with one another, so that it is *the relations among groups*, not individual characteristics, that are at stake. To attempt to score individual prestige on a uniform scale of ranking is quite useless (and impossible in practice) since each status group asserts the value of its style of life without necessarily conceding a position of inferiority in a status order. Therefore, one has to study and record the oppositional characterizations of groups. At their simplest these may involve statements such as "those people are ignorant" in contrast to us, who are educated (a commonly heard sentiment in Guyana); or those people have disorganized families, as opposed to us who really value families; but the contrasts may be much more complex and subtle. The sudden increase in the number of villagers building personal Hindu shrines in the 1970s seemed to have a great deal to do with racial polarization stemming from the 1960s that had deflected Indians from expressing status through "creolization." Not that such a process had been halted; many, perhaps most, East Indians living in Georgetown continued to be conspicuous consumers of imported goods. I often wondered just what was being said by the rice farmer on the West Coast Demerara who, in the 1950s, had a glass garage built for his American car.

Class situation is different from status situation in that it applies to individuals who specifically do not form a group. But class situation is not merely possession or non-possession of goods. People become a class when they are subject to the same market conditions where the life-chances, as Weber puts it, depend upon the control of material property, which in turn permits the conversion of mere wealth into capital, facilitating the monopolization of the "opportunities for making profit through exchange." Class situation in this sense is *not* just a matter of income distribution, but takes into account the influence on life-chances of being able to dispose of marketable objects. Although these are "material" objects, Weber uses the word *sachlich* (material) in such a way that it can include all kinds of impersonal things such as book-keeping systems, expert ways of doing things as disparate as business dealings, political lobbying or controlling material objects. When seen in this light, Weber's concept of class is quite close to that of Marx, but broadens somewhat the concept of "control of the means of production."

Unlike Marx, Weber regarded the persistence of status groups in modern complex societies to be one of their most fundamental features. Groups based on kinship, race, religion or other "primordial" characteristics are joined by others that are the very products of the apparently rational-legal and bureaucratic processes of modern society. Among the most important

of these are the products of modern educational institutions that claim the right to distribute certificates, degrees, and diplomas, thus controlling the admission of individuals to the charmed circles of the "educated." In modern economies the market is a mechanism for the balancing of interests in a purely impersonal and non-subjective manner that makes it the ideal-typical case of pure economic order, in which "pure class situation, nakedly and unambiguously, visibly to everyone, looms as the power that determines everybody's destiny" (Weber 1968:953). Even so, a new kind of *ständliche* development takes place as bureaucrats create new status groups based on education or certification, limiting entry to their ranks on the basis of possessing degrees, certificates or diplomas. Within the organizations that produce "qualified" individuals, status distinctions based on the most trivial activities appear, such as those among different fraternities, sororities or sporting activities. It is not difficult to see the relevance of this for the modern Caribbean. Pierre Bourdieu (1984:102-3) has shown how the actual designation of groups by occupation really serves to mask the true basis of their recruitment and membership.

The members of groups based on co-option ... (doctors, architects, professors, engineers, etc.) always have something else in common beyond the characteristics explicitly demanded. The common image of the professions ... is less abstract than that presented by statisticians; it takes into account not only the nature of the job and the income, but those secondary characteristics which are often the basis of their social value (prestige or discredit) and which, though absent from the official job description, function as tacit requirements, such as age, sex, social or ethnic origin, overtly or implicitly guiding co-option choices ... so that members of the corps who lack these traits are excluded or marginalized.

For all the reasons outlined here, it is more useful to follow Weber (and Wolk's reconsiderations of his work) and refer to "structures of inequality" than to use the dubious concept of "social stratification," and to view such structures as the articulation of a complex series of status groups. Class and status groups are inextricably intertwined, each conditioning the other rather than being separate "variables" in a calculable matrix.

If we now return to Guyana, following Diane Austin's advice to consider the way in which power is concentrated within various status groups rather than asking how class and race segment the society as a totality, we may be able to attain a better understanding of the course taken by violence in the 1960s. It would be unrealistic to expect that concepts of race, stereotypes, or whatever we want to call the residues of Anglo-European hegemony, will simply fade away.<sup>7</sup>

Discussions of "integration" that assume it to mean complete homogeneity, as opposed to "pluralism," are hardly worth consideration. The discussion of Caribbean societies has been imprisoned in the straightjacket of the plural society debate for far too long; any reasonable discussion of post-colonial society must take into account the conflict and contestation that inevitably accompanies any process of nation building or state formation. As Bourdieu points out, at the level of professional organization, various forms of social origin, including putative race, will long continue to be a part of the process of group formation, even in those groups that are supposedly rational-bureaucratic. The question is not whether cultural constructions of race continue to exist in the modern world – they do – but under what conditions does "race" or "ethnicity" come to be a major fault line in the society, making for violence of the kind that was seen in British Guiana in the 1960s. What does ethnography tell us about the way in which race and cultural differences infused the quotidian experience of rural Guyanese and their status considerations?

#### AFRICAN GUYANESE AND THE VEHICLES OF THEIR RELATION TO COLONIAL SOCIETY

I first went to British Guiana with the express intention of studying a "Negro village." That fact is, in itself, an interesting commentary on the manner in which anthropological problems were formulated in the early 1950s. Without going into the details of the manner in which colonial interests shaped anthropological research, suffice it to say that both official and academic forces inclined anthropologists working in the British colonies to focus upon the study of supposedly coherent entities within colonial societies. Thus, contemporaries going to Africa formulated projects for the study of this or that "tribe," while work in the Caribbean was focused upon this or that "racial/class group." Lloyd Braithwaite did his first study in the village of Blanchisseuse, considered to be a remote "Negro" village in Trinidad, not far from Melville and Frances Herskovits's field site of Toco, and he followed it up with the study of a predominantly East Indian community near Port of Spain. However, both Braithwaite and I attempted to locate our studies in a wider context of colonial society, and this was already the period when Fernando Henriques was writing about the color/class system of Jamaica, and Julian Steward and his students were attempting a portrait of Puerto Rican society as a whole. Still, even those efforts worked through the medium of the community study and with a particular vision of the totality within which the community was embedded.

After a few weeks of surveying I found what was widely recognized to

be a "very African" village on the West Coast Berbice. This designation was used by the villagers, who had a lively sense of the founding of the two original sections of the village by groups of ex-slaves who pooled their resources and purchased title to the land. As I explained in my first book on British Guiana (1956), that land had been passed down to the present inhabitants with a strong presumption that it should not be alienated to "strangers" in general and to East Indians in particular. Just to the west of August Town (a fictitious name) lay one of the largest East Indian villages in the country, the village that has been described in detail by Marilyn Silverman (1980) under the name of Rajgahr.<sup>8</sup> The farmers of that village were desperately short of rice land and cattle pasture while August Town residents had large amounts of uncultivated land that they were unwilling to sell, or even to rent. The generalized fear of losing land had been formalized in a village council resolution during the 1930s, asserting that title to village land would not be granted to any person not born there – including immigrant spouses, regardless of race.

In spite of this, relations between August Town and Rajgahr were, while not exactly close, at least cordial in 1951. Rajgahr men frequently stopped off in August Town rum shops on their way home from the sugar estate at Bath; Rajgahr women regularly sold vegetables in August Town at the early morning market (see Plate I in Smith 1956, facing p. 32); the East Indian headmaster of the Rajgahr Lachmansingh Memorial Canadian Mission (Presbyterian) School lived in a rented house in August Town; some August Town people regularly went to weddings in Rajgahr, especially since they had kin there through intermarriages among Africans, Chinese, and East Indians that had taken place over many years; and some August Town rice farmers had their padi milled by Rajgahr millers. An August Town African had been an elected member, and even elected Chairman, of the Rajgahr Village District Council (Silverman 1980:54-63). August Town proper was bordered on the east by a private estate owned by a family of East Indians who were very much a part of what I referred to as the August Town elite. That family sold the estate after I left, but when I returned for a further three months fieldwork in 1975, the estate was owned by yet another East Indian who had greatly improved the estate house and was successfully growing rice on a large scale. The old store in the middle of the village that had been owned by a Portuguese family was now splendidly improved but owned by an East Indian popularly known as "Nutcake," not because of any presumed mental peculiarities, but because he had started out some years earlier as a vendor of coconut cake and had gradually increased his fortune to the point where he was able to buy and improve the old store and purchase a hire car in

which he made a daily run to Georgetown and back.

I could go on to detail the ways in which the tissue of everyday relations involved individuals severally identified as African, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese and so forth, relations that were largely blanked out by the decision to study "an African village," and showed complicity in the ideological vision of British Guiana as a "Land of Six Peoples." However, I also want to stress the fact that the processes of "cultural struggle" described by Brackette Williams involved few elements deriving from Indian/African relations, partly because of the relative segregation of August Town and Rajgahr, but also because Anglo-European hegemony was all too real and had not yet become ghostly. The August Town elite – head teachers, the Portuguese store keeper, the wealthy Indian family – and its extensions in the district including the District Commissioner, the Police Inspector, the Medical Officer, and the English Manager of the nearby sugar plantation, all ordered their status striving in relation to the signs and symbols of British domination. The headmaster of the August Town Congregational School, who was very much a local African person, had a photograph of himself prominently displayed on the wall of his house flanked by photographs of the current King and Queen of England, while on the opposite wall were prints of "The Artful Dodger," "Oliver Twist," "Duty Calls," and "The Hero's Return." Individuals like this mixed freely with persons of other "races," as when they played bridge or attended each other's parties, and they represented to the village population the mode of their articulation with the colonial society.

When the report of the Constitutional Commission was published in October 1951, it aroused very little interest in August Town. Many people thought that universal adult suffrage was a mistake since it would inevitably result in large-scale bribery and corruption, and insofar as anyone had an opinion on the matter it was just as likely to prefer that British Guiana continue to be run by outsiders, as that it should be independent. Among the more politically aware, the major struggle was perceived to be a struggle against the poverty and backwardness imposed by an exploitative economic system represented by "King Sugar" in particular, and colonialism in general. As the campaign for the 1953 elections gathered momentum this relative apathy dissipated and August Town, like other rural areas of British Guiana, became caught up in the excitement of a new beginning. However, the rising fortunes of the People's Progressive Party did not result in the creation of new status groups in August Town; traditional elites and the general populace divided their support among a number of parties and individuals, and insofar as they rallied to the PPP, they were attracted by Forbes Burnham's accomplishments as an orator, as

a Guyana scholar, a barrister, and all the other marks of mastery of English culture.

Although August Town was, and is, a poor village, it had long been closely articulated with many aspects of colonial society. I have described elsewhere the remarkable absence from Guyana of syncretistic African Christian churches, especially when compared to Jamaica (R.T. Smith 1976b). African villages in Guyana have generally been tightly integrated into churches controlled from the capital, Georgetown, and ultimately from Britain or, in the case of the Catholic Church, more recently from the United States. August Town's Anglican and Congregational Churches claimed the allegiance of the vast majority of villagers, while only a minuscule number of people belonged to small chapters of the Jehovah's Witnesses. At the same time there was a lively, but generally clandestine, participation in various forms of African-derived religious practices ranging from spiritual healing to witch-finding to "Cumfa" rituals (see R.T. Smith 1976b:327-32). In an ideal-typical way they could be said to be comparable to Jamaican Pentecostalism in that the participants were predominantly women even though the controlling agents, such as drummers and ritual specialists, were frequently men, and that they gave women some sense of empowerment in situations of general subjugation. During the nineteenth century there was an upsurge of African religiosity but it seems not to have consolidated into syncretistic churches, probably because the Christian church schools provided the means for status "upliftment" and for some limited occupational mobility into urban trades and into teaching, nursing, and the police (see Rodney 1981:Chapter 4). The Christian churches in the African villages were centers of social empowerment at the same time that they were instruments of hegemonic domination by the colonial state. They developed their own hierarchies of clergy, lay clergy, schoolteachers, and other officials that reflected both class differences and male domination, but most of these people were tied by kinship to a wide range of people in the villages. School teachers constituted the main body of the village elite and connected it directly with the colonial society through their membership in various local government bodies, and in the case of one individual, through his nominated membership of the Legislative Council.

#### THE "PROBLEM" OF EAST INDIAN "ASSIMILATION"

As I pointed out above, the recourse to history, or to cultural differences, to explain the contemporary situation in Guyana tends to shift into a focus on the "problem" of East Indian "assimilation" to some hypothetically

homogeneous national culture. Even so fanatical a proponent of the plural society view of Guyana as M.G. Smith (1984:110) eventually saw Guyana as a two-segment society: Creoles and East Indians. It is, then, worth asking how rural Indian communities have articulated with colonial society since the 1950s. So long as discussion revolves around a supposed opposition between "plural society" and "common culture" or "common values," it is likely to degenerate into the listing of similarities and differences that are held to add up to identical, or disparate, institutions and norms. A similar problem arises if a sharp and exclusive distinction is made between "class" and other forms of social identifications based on "race," "religion" or "culture." The communities formed by East Indians differed in several significant ways from those formed by African ex-slaves. We can leave aside the sugar plantations where the plantation management exercised considerable control, even over the establishment of religious organizations of one kind or another (see Jayawardena 1963), until, first, organs of the central government, and then organized trade unions came to be vehicles for the articulation of plantation workers' interests. I shall concentrate on the rice-growing village of Windsor Forest that I studied in 1956 and again in 1975, and the village named Rajgahr studied by Silverman in 1969-70. Space does not permit a detailed analysis and comparison of these two villages but certain aspects of their contrasted experience are revealing.

Rajgahr was founded in 1902 as a government land settlement for former indentured immigrants in lieu of return passages to India. By 1911 there were 623 residents, though it is likely that laborers resident at Plantation Bath worked some of the land which they had been allotted without moving into the village. Rice was grown both as a subsistence crop and for sale though many inhabitants continued to work on the sugar estate. Although Rajgahr was a government land settlement, it was incorporated as a Country District with a council of seven members appointed by the central Local Government Board. The one church in British Guiana that had been active among East Indian immigrants was the Canadian Mission Church, (thus indicating yet again the manner in which colonial social institutions segmented the population); its head, the Reverend Cropper, had been the resident minister at Plantation Bath where most of the Rajgahr residents had formerly lived. When the village council was formed, Reverend Cropper was appointed as a member along with a series of other prominent persons who were both literate in English and, for the most part, Christians. Silverman provides a wealth of detail on the manner in which Rajgahr's internal politics developed over the years from the founding of the village until 1970, when she left the field. Because it was a



village district with its own council, the politics of the local community was focussed in that arena. This is very different from Windsor Forest.<sup>9</sup>

Windsor Forest was an active sugar estate at the beginning of the twentieth century but repeated inundation by the sea and the company's failure to maintain the sea defenses, led them to abandon the plantation, leaving the resident laboring population of East Indians, Africans, and Chinese to fend for themselves. A few pieces of land were sold or given to the residents, and eventually the colonial government acquired the estate at execution sale in order to protect its interest in outstanding debts. The residents gradually converted the sugar lands to cattle pasture and rice land, the factory was broken up and sold to help pay the cost of repair to the sea wall, and eventually the government decided to convert the estate, and its neighbor La Jalousie, into government land settlements. The colonial government made the fateful error of offering plots of land to the residents on 99-year leases at a fixed rental of \$6.00 per acre per annum (one British West Indian dollar equaled approximately 55 cents US in 1956; in 1994 one Guyana dollar was worth less than one cent US). In return for this rent, the government undertook to provide all maintenance of the estate, including sea defense and water control costs. The administration of the village was effectively vested in the regional superintendent of "Government Estates: West Demerara." Although a locally elected Advisory Council had been instituted it had little power and was not a forum for local political and factional conflict as in Rajgahr. However, this does not mean that such conflicts were absent. On the contrary: Windsor Forest's development as a rice growing community closely paralleled that of Rajgahr, with the same growth of internal differentiation as millers and shopkeepers emerged as a new village elite. However, in Windsor Forest the vehicle for status striving was not the mobilization of factional support for village council office, but religious organizations.

The three major religious organizations in 1956 were the Muslims who operated a mosque, a school for teaching Urdu and Arabic, and a boy scout troop; the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform group that owned a small meeting place and a school for teaching Hindi; the Sanatan Dharm Maha Sabha, the orthodox Hindu group that operates a temple complete with salaried priest and a small Hindi school. The Bharat Sevashram Sangh, a Hindu splinter group commonly known as "the Bengalis," was relatively new and relatively small. These organizations each had a full complement of officers, such as President, Secretary, Treasurer and committees of management, providing ample scope for the working out of factional politics. The articulation of status groups within the village was expressed through complex arguments and discussions of religious doctrine. Individuals as-

piring to leadership roles within the various organizations would pore over sacred books and secondary works so as to be able to make impressive and informed speeches on various public occasions. There can be no doubting the sincere interest of many of these individuals in the details of religious doctrine, but at the same time the language of religious dispute was also the language of factional conflict. The most influential men were those with an ample economic base, either as store keepers, rice millers, or large farmers; religious knowledge and piety were additional qualifications for status group leadership.

When the election campaigns gathered momentum prior to the 1953 elections there were numerous independent candidates and small parties that appealed with varying degrees of indirectness to Indian voters. Silverman has shown that the formation of the PPP provided the basis for the formation of a new faction in Rajgahr (Silverman 1980:115-30). In Windsor Forest, there was a tendency for the religious groups to align with national parties. The Muslims were generally sympathetic to parties that opposed the PPP, while the Arya Samajists were the most receptive to radical reform. In both communities the development of racial polarization in the early 1960s led to a consolidation of electoral support behind the PPP, but there was no automatic alignment of all Indians with that party. In Rajgahr at least one prominent leader became a member of the People's National Congress when it was formed by Forbes Burnham, and in Windsor Forest there continued to be strong opposition to the perceived "communism" of the PPP. More importantly, the struggle between the parties at the national level did not remove the importance of local status groups nor did it totally permeate them.

### CONCLUSION

A more careful analysis of the internal structure of apparently segregated rural communities than I have been able to make here would show how schematic are the depictions of the fundamental social and cultural separation of the African and Indian "communities" as they are so often called. There is nothing in their internal structure to suggest such a fundamental separation. In the early 1950s there were fundamental divisions among both Africans and Indians over the issues of "communism" and "capitalism," divisions that led to varying levels of alignment with political parties committed to these ideologies. However, Silverman's detailed analysis of the internal politics of Rajgahr shows clearly that it was never simple primordial identity or deep cultural divisions that produced political alignments. Economic and status interests determined the alignments of

local factions within a complex articulation of contesting status groups.

In the period of intense conflict designed to remove or retain Jagan and the PPP as the controllers of the state apparatus, a period that lasted for only a few years, from 1961 to 1965, racial confrontation dwarfed the status defining significance of local groups, and that struggle has certainly affected social relations at the most mundane levels in the period since then. However, at the risk of being labelled optimistic, not to say naïve, I am uneasy with theories that assume either the inevitability of that very conflict, or the equal inevitability of its consequence in the future. In 1995 it is important not to allow the historical imagination to become settled upon the idea that disabling racial conflict was, and therefore is, inevitable. The most pessimistic, and also exaggerated, account of Guyana's ills that I have seen recently is a paper written by Ralph R. Premdas of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad, entitled "Ethnic Conflict and Development: The Case of Guyana." There is an almost apocalyptic tone to the paper, detailing the pervasive "ethnicization" of politics since the 1950s, and arguing that the hostility between Africans and Indians has even divided overseas Guyanese communities. Yet his arguments are not too far removed from those I have set out above. He traces the situation at the beginning of 1992 to the odd concatenation of circumstances that occurred in the 1950s as the original PPP fell apart from a combination of external interference and failure of leadership on the part of Burnham and Jagan. However, he also assumes a pre-existing "pluralism" in the population of British Guiana exhibited in residential and occupational segregation, with a concomitant segregation of voluntary associations such as trade unions, religious organizations, and so forth. As with most models of the society constructed in terms of a macro-image of social relations, this one ignores or minimizes the many areas of social life where relations did not conform to the assumed determination of race or "ethnicity," but Premdas is too good an observer of social reality to completely overlook data that do not conform to this image.

Brackette Williams's work was carried out in Guyana during the most repressive period of PNC domination, when Burnham attempted to convert himself from a client of the United States into the leader of a Third World socialist state, thus pre-empting Jagan's claim to be the authentic leader of an authentic socialist party.<sup>10</sup> She viewed this situation as one where;

[E]thnic groups in Guyana stress cultural traits, interpret their experiences, and organize the functions of ethnic culture with one eye on preventing the other groups from taking over particular material opportunities that they believe should belong to their group, and with the other eye on the future construction of putative homogeneity and its institutionalization in civil society as they struggle over who should inherit the power relinquished by the Anglo-Europeans at the end of the colonial era (Williams 1989:438-39).

And she strikes a somber note as she generalizes her insights to say that "ethnicity labels the politics of cultural struggle in the nexus of territorial and cultural nationalism that characterizes all putatively homogeneous nation states," implying, and not without reason, that all nation states, because of the very basis of their construction, must marginalize "peripheral categorical units" (Williams 1989:439).

However realistic a conclusion this may be, it seems to short-circuit the consideration of bases of status group formation other than race, and to over-stress the importance of the putatively homogeneous nation state as the only significant reference for constructing a transformist hegemony, perhaps because of the very tendency of any discussion of "ethnicity" to lead toward that outcome identified by Max Weber (1968:394-95) when he wrote of the "disutility of the notion of 'Ethnic Group'."

[T]he notion of "ethnically" determined social action subsumes phenomena that a rigorous sociological analysis ... would have to distinguish carefully: the actual subjective effects of those customs conditioned by heredity and those determined by tradition; the differential impact of the varying content of custom; the influence of common language, religion, and political action, past and present, upon the formation of customs; the extent to which such factors create attraction and repulsion, and especially the belief in affinity or disaffinity of blood; the consequences of this belief for social action in general, and specifically for action on the basis of shared custom or blood relationship for diverse sexual relations, etc. — all of this would have to be studied in detail. It is certain that in this process the collective term "ethnic" would be abandoned, for it is unsuitable for a really rigorous analysis.

Premdas has half-acknowledged that by the early 1950s "something of a shared locally derived 'creole culture' had emerged" in British Guiana, but that the years of intensifying polarized conflict "practically destroyed all these shared institutions and practices" (Premdas 1992:25). But is this true? The state apparatus may have been dominated by the People's National Congress embodied as an African party, but it surely embraced a large number of Indians, especially in local government bodies, and the party itself succeeded, no matter how cynically, in recruiting Indian mem-

bership. By the early 1980s, the PNC had deployed enough patronage at the local level in the rural areas to persuade many Indians to offer at least nominal allegiance, and some offered a great deal more. One day when I was talking to another anthropologist in a Georgetown bar, in the company of a very old friend of mine from Windsor Forest, I asked him what was involved in his job as a local party organizer in the village. He answered that it was largely to take note of subversive talk such as he had just heard from us, and report it to "the authorities." He was only half joking.

One other aspect of the Guyana case is important. Daniel Miller, in a study of Trinidad, has been impressed by the dualism of attitudes toward the nation-state;

on the one hand, a passionate nationalism, and a sincere concern with the history, and achievements of the country including its symbolic elements such as the national anthem. At the same time I heard politicians bemoan the lack of these concerns, and found in other contexts ... quite the opposite sense of self-denigration and antipathy to the idea of being Trinidadian.<sup>11</sup>

The same is certainly true of Guyana and the Guyanese. Both Guyana and Trinidad are now, and always have been, creatures of modern capitalist expansion, and although it is justifiable to consider their internal dynamics, and even their attempts to create nations out of the remnants of colonial states, one cannot ignore the continuing reality of dependence, in all senses of that term, nor the incorporation of a wider hegemony into their very constitution. The ideology of the People's Progressive Party of the 1950s was socialist, universalistic, and full of bluster about creating a completely new society. It has been remarked frequently that Jagan's socialism was also peculiarly American, but however that may be, it was certainly egalitarian, universalistic, and individualist. Now that his party is back in office he has embraced the idea of building a market economy and encouraging outside investment. But apart from such economic development strategies, the Guyanese people are now, and always have been, deeply affected by what has been called globalization.

I suggested at the beginning of this paper that "history" has been used by social scientists studying political conflict in Guyana in such a way that it has directed attention away from the complexity of the conflicts, and onto the stereotyped images of how Guyana was created and what continues to be its real underlying structure. Is this a denial of the relevance of history for anthropological analysis? Of course not. Rather it is a call for what Sydel Silverman (1979:433) called the "responsible use of historical material ... a collaboration [of anthropology and history] in which the

work of each discipline can nourish that of the other." Unfortunately the overwhelming interest of students of Guyana, whether historians or social scientists, has been in the roots of recent social conflict, to the extent that one historian has shaped his investigation of nineteenth-century Guyanese history around the dubious project of "testing" the plural society versus stratification theories (Moore 1987). However, I have been primarily concerned with the recourse to more distant history as a means of supporting analyses of recent events, a procedure fraught with problems of its own, as Orlando Patterson (1982) pointed out some years ago. Daniel Miller (1994), in a novel but creative way, has employed a very generalized history in his study of Trinidad. Arguing that Trinidad is a salient example of the problems of modernity, he contends that:

from its inception Trinidad has been the creation of the global economy, and continues to have little protection from the buffeting of larger economic trends ... The Caribbean was itself the creation of a modernist scheme established with unusual clarity and completeness by Europeans, and today the IMF and World Bank continue to exert this peculiar rationality of economics, if in less extreme fashion (Miller 1994:24).

Building upon his previous work on mass consumption, work informed by an unusually broad understanding of both philosophy and anthropological theory, Miller recognizes the diversity of the origins of Trinidad's population and the salience of ethnicity in self-representation. However, he also perceives a generalized sense of oppression deriving from the experience of colonial domination that has "created a culture of disparagement of the powerless and emulation of the powerful" (Miller 1994:22), a culture that has been vividly depicted in the various writings of V.S. Naipaul. Even more significant are the conclusions derived from a careful examination of material culture where he found that "ethnic distinctions were of minimal importance to the selection of objects and their juxtaposition in home design" so that there were "evident discrepancies between what people expressed in language and what they seemed to value in action" (Miller 1994:10).

Guyana is not Trinidad of course, but certain aspects of their development and present condition are similar. In both cases local people are working to create systems of value with materials, both real and ideal, that derive not only from their immediate environment and their historic experience, but also within a global system that is just as important to them. There is no reason to believe that the "nationalist intellectuals" of today are any less creative than those to whom Clifford Geertz referred, and much reason to hope that they are a good deal wiser. The deeply pes-

simistic Ralph Premdas (1992:26) writes that Guyana has passed "the collective insanity threshold" that produces crippled personalities seeking psychological redemption through communal parties led by apocalyptic personalities that are no longer the means of aggregating political interests but are more like psychiatric clinics. But where does he publish this analysis? In a discussion paper for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. So that in the midst of despair there is hope.

### NOTES

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1. See Hanley (1979) for an account of technological change in this village.
2. The population was classified in the 1946 and 1964 censuses as follows:

	1946	%	1964	%
East Indian	163,434	43.5	320,070	50.1
African	143,385	38.2	199,830	31.3
Mixed	37,685	10.0	75,990	11.9
Amerindian	16,322	4.4	29,430	4.6
Portuguese	8,543	2.3	6,830	1.1
Chinese	3,567	1.0	3,910	0.6
European	2,480	0.7	2,420	0.4
Asiatic (mainly Syrian)	236	0.1		
Not Stated	49			
Totals	375,701	100.00	638,480	100.00

No census figures have been published recently and racial classifications are no longer given in official statistics. However, massive migrations during the 1970s and 1980s – to Canada, Britain, and the United States mainly but also to neighboring countries in the West Indies and Suriname – have probably offset any natural increase.

3. This argument was used by Jagan (1966:Chapter XVI), the leader of the PPP.
4. I do not mean to imply that her discussion of historical developments is simplistic. In fact she has some very interesting and detailed discussions of the Amerindian and Portuguese groups that go far beyond the usual narrative.
5. See R.T. Smith 1971, 1976a, 1980; Newman 1964; Reno 1964; Jagan 1966; Despres 1967; Glasgow 1970; Henfrey 1972; Lutchman 1974; Danns 1982.
6. See Jagan 1966; R.T. Smith 1971, 1976a; Reno 1964; Despres 1967; Glasgow

1970; Henfrey 1972; Lutchman 1974; Danns 1982 for detailed accounts of events leading up to this election.

7. They may not be residues of Anglo-European hegemony of course; the modern world system is sufficiently saturated with racist stereotypes, and reports of such stereotypes, that it can quickly replenish any fading images.

8. Maintaining these fictitious names, once an anthropological convention, is a waste of time. Anyone in Guyana can easily recognize which villages are being written about, and indeed Marilyn Silverman provides a map of her area with the correct name of "August Town" clearly marked, just as I referred to her "Rajgahr" by its correct name in various places.

9. See R.T. Smith 1957; Smith & Jayawardena 1958, 1959, 1967; and Hanley 1975, 1979 for fuller discussions of Windsor Forest.

10. The bitterest blow of all for Jagan was being asked (instructed?) by the Russians and Cubans to cooperate with Burnham (R.T. Smith 1976a:222-23).

11. This passage is quoted with permission from the manuscript draft of Miller 1994, but I have been unable to find it in the published version.

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FAMILY NARRATIVES AND MIGRATION DYNAMICS:  
BARBADIAN TO BRITAIN<sup>1</sup>

It was an old man in St. Philip, Barbados, who first told me the story:

My father [who] was a laborer ... been to Panama ... and British Guyana [and] America. He die over in America ... I had a uncle over there too, my mother brother, was in America ... I went to America in 1944 and ... in 1945. I have thirteen kids by my wife ... some out in England.<sup>2</sup>

The cyclical labor demands of international capital, the policies of receiving countries, the "pressures" of over-population and unemployment – while these conventional models of migration may explain the timing and the scale of specific migratory movements, they fail to account for ways in which migration engages historically with other social and cultural goals, including the "open" goal of migration *per se*. Migration, particularly from the Caribbean, is assumed to be "the movement of labor" where, as the geographer Elizabeth Thomas-Hope (1992:8) comments "interpretation (of migrant behavior) at the level of societal meaning and personal consciousness has scarcely been touched upon."

Between 1948 and the 1973 approximately 550,000 people of Caribbean birth migrated to Britain, the majority arriving before the 1962 Immigration Act effectively cut off further immigration. Britain after the war had experienced a shortage of labor in key areas of its reconstruction program such as the transport and catering industries, and the National Health Service. Although initially reluctant to call in Commonwealth workers, by the mid-1950s many employers such as London Transport, British Railways, Lyons Tea Houses, and the National Health Service had

embarked on recruitment programs in the Caribbean. The first group of immigrants came from Jamaica, and they remain by far the largest group of Caribbean nationals. The 1971 census (which first differentiated Caribbean nationals by island of birth) revealed that Jamaicans comprised 171,775 of the total Caribbean population, Barbadians 27,055, Trinidadians and Tobagodians 17,135, and the Guyanese 21,070.<sup>3</sup> By 1981 the Jamaican community stood at 164,119 or 55.6 percent of the Caribbean population, Barbadians at 25,247 or 8.55 percent, citizens of Trinidad and Tobago at 16,334 or 5.53 percent, and Guyanese at 21,686 or 7.35 percent, with the remainder from the Leeward and Windward Islands.<sup>4</sup> Although overall the Caribbean community in Britain represents less than one percent of the population of Britain, migrants as a percentage of the population of their home countries are large. Between 1951 and 1971, 7 percent of the population of Jamaica migrated to Britain, 12 percent of the population of Barbados, and 1.4 percent of Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>5</sup> These figures suggest very different cultural and economic pressures operated in each of those islands to encourage migration. Equally, although figures on return migration are difficult to ascertain, there has been a significant reduction in the size of the Caribbean communities in the last decade, some of it as the result of death, but mostly due to re- and return migration. There are also significant differences. Between the census years 1971 and 1991, the Barbadian and Jamaican communities have declined by 17 percent (from 27,055 to 22,294, and 171,775 to 142,483 respectively).<sup>6</sup> The Trinidadian community has remained not only stable, but appears to show an increase from 17,135 in 1971 to 17,620 in 1991.<sup>7</sup>

Such significant differences in the patterns of migration, settlement, and return, require fresh explanation. Conventional explanations of migration not only limited an understanding of migrant motivation to the purely functional but, by disregarding the cultural and historical dimension of Caribbean migration, distorted interpretation of the nature and growth of Caribbean communities in the host societies. Early debate on the Caribbean community in Britain, for instance, was located within a framework of race relations which assumed an economic motive in migration, permanency in settlement, and placed assimilation and integration as the goal and yardstick of migrant success (Huxley 1964; Banton 1967). Recent studies, however, are beginning to redress this balance. In the United States, research by Philip Kasinitz (1992) or Constance Sutton and Elsa Chaney (1994) has located the development and peculiarities of Caribbean communities in the United States within the migratory culture of the Caribbean and within a tradition of mobility from the Caribbean to the United States which began early in the twentieth century. Both indicate

the strength and resilience of Caribbean communities and the growth of "transnational" identities as an identifiable and continuing feature of those communities and of their Caribbean identity. In Britain, however, where migration from the Caribbean is of more recent origin, and where the Caribbean community is only now entering into its second and third generation, revisionist research on Caribbean migration and communities in Britain has assumed a more conceptual position. Recent studies have (rightly) distanced themselves from the old race relations paradigm to focus on ethnicity, and on issues of identity and diaspora. For writers such as Stuart Hall (1990; 1991) or Paul Gilroy (1993) this contemporary focus is closely linked to notions of modernity and post-modernism, and an attempt to move beyond the simple geographic location of ethnicity into a construction of identity which stresses culture, mobility, and hybridity. A more empirically based study by John Western (1992) also takes identity as its central issue. The majority of *A Passage to London*, however, charts the geographic and social mobility within Britain of a small group of Barbadian informants and makes little attempt to address the historical, cultural, or ethnic context of Barbadian migration to Britain or the lingering context of imperialism in which the migrants found themselves in Britain. As a result, though described as a "social history," the book is curiously ahistorical. His employment of reconstructed oral interviews does not enable verification of his sources; and the attempt to enter into contemporary debate on identity lacks the conceptual punch of Hall or Gilroy or, from a different perspective, Homi Bhabha (1994).

The recent emphasis on identity, however, while making a valuable and exciting contribution to debate, does not address completely Thomas-Hope's notion of "societal consciousness" and, with its focus on response rather than motivation, does little to explain the cause or process of migration, or the impact of both on migrants and their families. Nor does it fully investigate the contemporary historical development of Caribbean communities in Britain. Although the original motivations of migrants may be "history" for their children, nevertheless the dreams and aspirations which were forged by them may retain a dynamic, translated and transformed by subsequent generations. The global dimension of migration, played out in international labor markets, and mediated by the maneuvers of the host polities, engages with a home-based social and cultural history which has furnished and continues to furnish Caribbean migrants with their own agenda. In this agenda, the family can be seen to play a role as both the end goal, and the means to achieve it. It is worth reconstructing

those motivations, for the historical insights they may bear on present and future migrant behavior.

The old man's story was one I was to hear many times again. Its significance lay, I believed, in the challenge it offered to the assumption that migration arose from an historical, rather than an economic vacuum. This was a *family* which for three *known* generations had migrated. Drawing on insights from both the social and behavioral sciences, this suggests several important dimensions (Byng-Hall 1990; Bertaux & Thompson 1993; Thompson 1993). First, the existence of a family dynamic, in this case, a migration dynamic which both determined behavior and gave it meaning; second, the interplay between this migration dynamic and other family dynamics (such as color), and family goals (such as social mobility); third, the importance of the family in approving and enabling migration; and fourth, an ethos reflecting and reproducing a broader culture of migration which perhaps ran parallel with, but did not necessarily conform to, the vagaries of international labor demands. Indeed, once family stories and memories are taken into perspective then the motives for migration become more complex, ambiguous, and culturally specific.

My research, using oral, life stories and engaging with different generations of Barbadian migrant families is an attempt to see the family as both the tool and the material which, through its dynamics, creates and shapes historical mentalities and identities. The family in terms both of its structure and directives may, therefore, offer a key to understanding change. The clues to this lie within memory in its twin role as agent of socialization and historical evidence. The migration narratives demonstrate the historical importance of what Maurice Halbwachs (1980) describes as the "collective memory."<sup>8</sup> For Halbwachs the language, images, and priorities which structure memory are socially and culturally produced. Individual memory is, moreover, always collective, for it contains, and synthesizes, the memories of previous generations. As an active ingredient in socialization, it influences the behavior and actions of successive generations. For the historian, memory as a source offers a clue not merely to past experiences, but to the interpretation of, and meanings given to, such experiences.

This article is therefore as much to do with understanding the history and culture of migration as the process by which such a culture is transmitted and transformed through the shape, structure, and meanings of the memories recounted. At the same time, in the case of Barbados, it can show how the links between family and migration continue to play a role in the motivation of migrants and thereby contribute towards a contemporary understanding of the hopes, aspirations, and lifestyles of the Barbadian community in Britain, including the emergence of Caribbean family

structures in Britain, and demographic change. Moreover, by focusing on one Caribbean community, rather than a conflation of the community as a whole, it is possible to isolate features which may link, and distinguish, behavior. In the case of the migration from Barbados to Britain, the length of the migration proved, for a variety of reasons, considerably longer than anticipated. As a result, partners and children eventually joined the primary migrant in Britain. Although this has imposed different kinds of strains on the migration ethic, nevertheless the narratives here hint at the multiplicity of meanings which migration held for the first generation of migrants.<sup>9</sup>

This essay is based on a quota sample of eighty-five life-story interviews conducted across two and three generations of Barbadian families in Britain and Barbados. Contact with informants in Britain and Barbados was made initially through membership of, or an association with the members of, various branches of the Barbados Association, of whom the majority had family members of previous generations migrate. The sample ensured a balance of class, gender, occupation, and educational attainment. From the interview sample, three families have been taken as case studies. Tracing a detailed lineage within these families shows that family ethos is closely linked to family history. In all the families, members of the previous generation had migrated in the early decades of the twentieth century, where some of the influences of the nineteenth century could be expected to resonate. In all families there is clearly a "migration dynamic" of which the meaning differs as it engages with other predominant cultural discourses of both class and color. Migration, even within families, is never that simple. It probably never was.

#### JASPER'S FAMILY

The first family illustrates how independence from plantation discipline became a precondition for the family's migration, and continued as a theme of social mobility throughout the continuing migrations of family members. Jasper's<sup>10</sup> father had migrated to Britain in 1954, his mother in 1956. Jasper himself migrated to join his parents in Britain in 1961, at the age of fifteen and returned, a successful restaurateur, in 1987 with his mother and family. Jasper's father, at the time he migrated, was employed in Barbados, and economic improvement was one consideration in his decision to migrate. Social influences also played some part, "It was an exciting time," Jasper recalled "because everyone on the island ... was talking about emigration to Britain."<sup>11</sup> Talk which was placed, significantly, within a broader historical context.



I loved listening ... to the old fellas ... telling stories ... about how they went off to Curaçao and they went off to Panama and they was building the canal, and they went off to Cuba and Aruba and they found the oil ... the new place on stream then was Britain ... the big talk back in the 1950s was emigrating to Britain ... these men were talking about emigration to Britain, it was the new thing.<sup>12</sup>

Yet the stories played also into a particular domestic context. Jasper's mother, Olive, (born in 1926) describes how:

My grandfather ... was in Cuba and send for my two uncles ... then after my mother could get grown up, then she went to Trinidad ... and leave me very small, as a baby ... [My mother] was working ... then she leave Trinidad and went on to Panama, and meet her husband there ... he took her from Panama to Jamaica ... *Our family love to travel* [emphasis added].<sup>13</sup>

Olive, an only child, had been reared by her grandmother, a cook in a plantation house, by her great-grandmother, Lola, and by her aunt, while her own mother was away in Trinidad. Olive's mother had also been reared by Lola, while *her* father was away in Cuba and her mother had worked. When Olive and her husband migrated to England, Jasper was cared for by his maternal great-grandparents; his siblings were reared by his grandmother who was still in Jamaica. The importance of other families members, in particular grandmothers, in child care is a characteristic of many Barbadian families. In this case, it facilitated and enabled the migration of two generations of one family (see also Barrow 1977). For three generations – including Jasper's great-grandfather's migration to Cuba – a parent had been absent through migration. In terms of family models and historical continuities, this had resulted in the youngest generation being brought up by grandparents whose own historical reference points were a generation removed. Models of migration were part of the family lore, and migration was the norm.

The family facilitated migration in other ways. Although, as pointed out by Olive, the family was not "very big" principally because they "was away," both she and Jasper maintained they were "very close." The extended family, of cousins and aunts, included Jasper's grandfather's "outside" families. All provided mutual support for each other, in terms of exchanging and sharing provisions,

relatives used to travel for miles to bring ... provisions ... breadfruit, sweet potatoes, yams ... when one of the old cousins ... were growing things like sweet potatoes, we'd probably be growing cassavas and eddoes, so we'd do a swap ... back in that period ... for a woman to bring up a family completely on her own would have been difficult.<sup>14</sup>

Mutual support was "all part of the family thing" and applied, in this case, whether a partner was absent as the result of migration or for other reasons. Second, Jasper's great-grandfather had sent the money for his sons to join him in Cuba. When Jasper's father decided to emigrate:

he didn't have the fifty pounds [for the passage] ... so my grandmother from Jamaica sent the money to my father ... she was instrumental in helping him get to Britain so that, in turn, he could help us to get to Britain.<sup>15</sup>

Third, throughout the travels of the various members, regular remittances were sent back home,

the boys [Olive's uncles] went and send back to their mum. My mother went too, and my mum send back to her Mum and they're always sending ... thereafter then ... my uncle [in Curaçao] used to send out a lot of clothes, pretty bath towels and powder, and everything you could think of, panties, everything.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, with each remittance, contact was maintained. Just as family support enabled the migrants to leave, so migration assisted in the maintenance of the family at home, ensuring family loyalty and identity across the generations, and across the seas. This may account for the ultimate return of family members to Barbados which, in turn, became incorporated in the family model of migration. The family demonstrated a positive disposition to migration, and a determination to maintain family links and unity throughout migration. This was a family which, as Olive said, "love to travel."

But how did it start? Both Jasper and his mother emphasized that they were not "plantation" people, that is, agricultural laborers. Olive's maternal grandmother who brought her up, was "a cook. She never worked *in* a plantation ... She uses to work *at* Wiltshire's plantation" (emphasis added).<sup>17</sup> Her grandfather was a fisherman. Jasper's father worked as a butler and chauffeur for a plantation owner. This pride of independence can be traced to Lola, who, although originally a "located" plantation laborer, (that is, a laborer *in* a plantation) baked bread, and by working

very, very hard ... was able to buy the land from Wiltshire's plantation ... that cost her just over ten dollars. But ten dollars in the late 1800s was a fortune, you know.<sup>18</sup>

Lola, in other words, had raised sufficient money, by baking and selling bread, to buy her family land and therefore release from the Contract Law. This Law had been imposed in 1840 and bound the former slaves to their plantations of birth or residence. For nearly a century, until its repeal in 1937, the Contract Law controlled the conditions, behavior, and location of plantation laborers and their access to plantation land (Chamberlain 1990). Lola – and her descendants – were free to sell their labor, and to migrate without constraints.<sup>19</sup> Olive, her great grand-daughter was still carefully distinguishing between working *at*, rather than *in* a plantation. Jasper, his mother, and grandmother had lived on this land and,

attached to the kitchen was a lovely large oven ... that was my great-great-grandmother's oven ... she used to bake as well. Our whole family's always been in cooking or catering ... in fact, today ... there is a corner ... known as Lola Corner ... because that's where she baked ... everyone converged there every Friday and Saturday ... there's nothing there now, just the piece of land ... which has been handed down from the family, from Lola to her daughter, which was my great-grandmother, to my grandmother, to my mother, and I suppose my mother pass it on to me.<sup>20</sup>

The land was at once both a symbol of individuality, and of resistance to the plantation (Mintz 1987; Besson & Momsen 1987; Marshall 1993). In this family there is a clear recollection of genealogy, and a clear recognition of the role of their ancestor in differentiating and demarcating the family route away from direct dependence on the plantation. Lola's independence, and success, became incorporated into a family dynamic which was as much a part of the family inheritance as Lola's Corner. It pervades the accounts of her family, whether descended by blood or marriage. Olive's grandfather returned from Cuba. He was a fisherman who owned three boats, (and supported an "outside family") and "was considered fairly wealthy." Olive's uncles returned from their travels, and built "a lovely bungalow." Olive's mother has a restaurant in Jamaica. It may be to this that Jasper's final entrepreneurial success (in food) may be attributed. It is possible, too, that the fact, as well as the sense, of long established independence from plantation control may have been a contributory factor in the ability and the willingness to migrate. The decision of Jasper's family to migrate appears to have been prompted by a simple and time-specific economic expedient, but in fact contains within it a far more complex

history of *family* social mobility and geographic migration. It is a history which confirms the patterns of migration identified in the nineteenth century: of individual "casual" migrations of both men and women.<sup>21</sup>

#### URSULA'S FAMILY

In the second family, although migration has been a consistent pattern, it is not migration per se, but another powerful family legend – and one which in Barbados has a particular resonance – which can be used to explain and understand motives. Ursula was born in 1938, left Barbados in 1959, and returned in 1976. Ursula's father, a carpenter, emigrated to Curaçao, visiting home every three years. Although he was absent throughout most of her childhood, his remittances from Curaçao paid for her secondary education, and a range of private tuition which she enjoyed as a child.

Ursula's interview contained one agenda item: that of difference. Her childhood was "different," she married a man "completely different," her own migration pattern – and her return – was "different" to the majority of those who migrated in the 1950s. The family circumstances which eased her settlement in England were "different." Ursula had been brought up to believe she was "different," by her mother and, particularly, maternal grandmother, with whom she lived, and "gradually it's instilled in me up to the day, and I'm still that sort of person."<sup>22</sup>

Her father's migration, her status as a singleton child (her mother's only child) provide one explanation for her "special" status. It is not, however, sufficient, for the strong sense of difference derives not from the material comforts resulting from her father's migration, but from the fact that:

My mother was mulatto ... my grandmother remembers her father was white ... So naturally my mother still had a very strong high color ... so I was of a lighter complexion. People tell me that I still have features that show I am [partly white] ... my grandmother ... had actually grown up on the plantation ... [and] looked more to the white race than the colored.<sup>23</sup>

Although her grandmother's sister had "married back into white,"<sup>24</sup> her grandmother had "married to a colored person," which "created a stir ... so ... she used to more or less stay to herself."<sup>25</sup> Ursula's grandfather, a tailor, migrated to Panama.

My grandmother said that ... he did not stay for long because he was not the laborer type of person ... being very soft ... he couldn't work as hard as the others, he was not used to it.<sup>26</sup>

Race was the leitmotif of her life. The story of her ancestry was told in the opening stages of the interview. It continued to dominate her narrative. She was the child, and the grandchild, of migrant workers. What appeared to be important was not the absence of her father (in other interviews, this is often given priority) but that her father provided the means for the family – and Ursula in particular – to live out a life of difference which it was felt, as light-skinned people, was their entitled inheritance and which her grandmother, in particular, wished to convey by stressing, and practicing, difference. “I suppose having all this for me I was special.”<sup>27</sup> This was something her grandfather had failed to achieve for her grandmother, and mother, in Panama. He was too “soft.” In one stroke – repeating her grandmother’s story – she both dismissed his attempts, and explained it by elevating his status. He was not a natural laborer, unlike other Panama migrants. For, unlike her grandmother’s sister who had married a white man, it was her grandmother’s “lot”<sup>28</sup> to marry someone who was “a colored person and brought her here, on this very estate.”<sup>29</sup>

Ursula went to the Modern High School. She wanted to be a nurse but,

I didn’t want to really go to England with the people that were going at the time ... my mother used to say [if] there were too many people rushing anywhere, it can’t be [for you] ... she brought me up that way too ... it’s funny, I didn’t want to go [to England].<sup>30</sup>

Ursula left in 1959 to train in Canada. After two years, however, she returned to Barbados to marry “somebody completely different.” They returned to Canada, but in 1963 migrated to England, in order for Ursula to complete her training, and for her husband to begin his. In England, Ursula experienced neither discrimination nor prejudice. Everyone was always friendly; they were treated as “special.” “Especially me coming from Canada.”<sup>31</sup> “We have always integrated.”<sup>32</sup> ... But then everybody’s not like me, you see. Having mixed and travelled, I suppose it made a difference.”<sup>33</sup> England, moreover, “felt like home.”<sup>34</sup>

When their second child was born, Ursula’s mother came over from Barbados to help look after the baby, an “arrangement ... *different* to other people.”<sup>35</sup>

This baby was light in complexion ... And she used to always say, “if anybody sees me outside they’ll think he’s my child” ... She didn’t even want my husband to do much for him. She wanted to do everything with him ... She said, “If anybody sees him outside they’ll think he’s white.”<sup>36</sup>

Her mother died in England, and was buried there. "I suppose it's *more usual* for people to fly bodies backwards and forwards" (emphasis added).<sup>37</sup> At the time, they had no plans to return to Barbados. England was "special." In 1976, however, the family returned. Ursula's daughter, Rosamond, recalls that in England "Mum and Dad ... never had any colored friends at all."<sup>38</sup> She was eleven when the family returned. England, she felt, offered

an easier life than here ... a better life than here ... It was a shock when I first came ... Mum and dad didn't talk that much about it [Barbados] ... we knew they were not born in England ... that they came from Barbados, but we hadn't a clue about what it was like, nothing ... [Barbados] felt really strange ... at first I said, "Dad, look at all these black people" ... That was really strange at first ... it was a bit of a shock.<sup>39</sup>

Rosamond was sent to a private girls school on the island. In her opinion, "The best schools, the private schools, are more white than black ... the schools that you find low in standard, you'll find more black people."<sup>40</sup> Rosamond works as a clerk in a department store in Bridgetown. She admits that her GCE results were not "really too good" but is nevertheless determined to send her own child to the same school when she is of age. Her brother, the "light skinned" child, however, "didn't seem to like it [Barbados] and never settled," and has returned to England to live.

Ursula returned to Barbados on the death of her father who left her some property and a small grocery business (described by Rosamond as a "rum shop"). In the course of the interview with Rosamond, it emerged that Ursula had not been her father's only child. She had a half sister (an "outside" child), who had migrated to Trinidad, and who also inherited some land from their father, which she then sold to Ursula. Whether Ursula, as a child, knew about the existence of this half sister or not is almost immaterial. She did not mention her in the interview. The value she inherited, cherished, and nurtured was that of racial difference which was offered as an explanation for a life which she perceived to be radically different from those around her. This was a "specialness" which would not have been shared by her half sister, was not shared by her father, nor her grandfather. It is, however, a characteristic still sung by Rosamond, and repeated in her aspirations for her own daughter. That single white ancestor is now six generations removed from Ursula's grand daughter. Migration, for Ursula, enabled a perception of difference to be materialized, initially through her father, secondly through her own migration to England. It is still reflected by her daughter.

## JEFFREY'S FAMILY

In the final family the ethos concerns again the role of migration in social mobility, although it was given a fresh twist as perceptions were interpreted to conform to myth. Jeffrey came to England in 1962. He was twenty years old.

My plans was to start out five years in England ... from England go to America, Canada, do a bit of travelling ... get a lot of money, and go back to Barbados ... and build a right, nice house.<sup>41</sup>

He was a carpenter/joiner. Like many other informants, economic hardship was not the primary reason for leaving Barbados. Indeed, most of those who came to England were young, skilled, and employed.<sup>42</sup> Like Dick Wittington, he came for adventure and hoped to find fortune.

Jeffrey nearly made his fortune. Soon after he arrived, he formed a rock group in which he was the lead singer. In time, they turned professional and were due to cut their first record, when Jeffrey left the group. Nevertheless, the group "got the nerve to do the recording, and they got the worst singer in the group, he ended up singing the record."<sup>43</sup> The record made the charts. If he had been the singer, Jeffrey believes, "it would have got to number one."<sup>44</sup> "I do regret it, when I talk about all that money we could have made ... thousands, millions of pounds."<sup>45</sup>

Fortune had eluded him, fate was against him. Even small opportunities were lost, "if I was as wise as I am today, I would have buy a house in the sixties, probably I'd be in a better position."<sup>46</sup> Although Jeffrey went to Germany to work for a while, the big opportunity never returned again. "Unless you're a gambling man that win the money all the time, or have a crooked mind to get money other ways."<sup>47</sup> But what was the context for this? Jeffrey's father, Garfield, was born in 1920. His mother left him when he was four months old. "In them days," he says, "boats come and pick them up alongside the wharf and carry them away to Guyana."<sup>48</sup>

His mother never returned. Unlike Olive, whose mother also left her as a baby, or Ursula, who lived without her father, Garfield's experiences were not so fortunate. Under the regime of his father and stepmother, he "had to do everything around the house ... I couldn't leave home and go out and play when I got work to do."<sup>49</sup> During the school vacation, he had to work for eight cents a day, "picking grass" on a plantation. He gave the wages to his father and stepmother. He left school at fourth standard, working full time at the plantation for eighteen cents a day. The work was "hard," so he went to learn the mason's trade. As an apprentice, his wages

were less than agricultural work, and he was exploited by his boss who required him to work at the weekends with the horses.

"It wasn't easy," Garfield said, "not for me." His life he characterized by bad luck, and hard work. When he was eighteen he went to the United States as a migrant worker and continued going for the next twenty-five years. Jeffrey remembers his father, "was always travelling ... Cuba ... Panama ... America," for two, and three years at a time.<sup>50</sup> Garfield went to harvest his fortune. However, "I wasn't lucky." One time, for instance,

[w]ent to Florida to pick oranges. When I get there, last year enough oranges, last year. Oh Lord ... but not when I get there! Oranges gone! ... The American people would get the best bearing tree, and you, a contract man ... you never get the best.<sup>51</sup>

Although Garfield used to write, Jeffrey recalls that "he never used to get enough money to send ... home."<sup>52</sup> As a result, with eight children at home, Jeffrey's mother worked as a domestic. His maternal grandmother, with whom they lived, helped with the child care. She died when Jeffrey was twelve, "so that's when I had to finish school ... early ... because I had to help the other kids ... I had no choice."<sup>53</sup>

At fourteen Jeffrey began his apprenticeship as a carpenter. A few years later, Garfield managed to make sufficient money in America to buy some land. He built the house himself, "because I didn't able to pay." The children helped by fetching water to mix the mortar; nobody else helped. "Friends? Ha! Friends help if you got money."<sup>54</sup>

Despite these interpretations, Jeffrey's perception of his father is that he "done well." Indeed, the contradictions in their perceptions and narratives is striking. According to Jeffrey, when it came to building the house,

I [did] the laying out, the foundation work and all that ... and some of the lads that I was learning trade with, my father says to me, "tell them to come and help me build indoors," he says, "I'll pay them" ... so they came one evening, straight from work ... they used to come on Saturdays and Sundays ... they got it all finished.<sup>55</sup>

When Jeffrey migrated to Britain, he sent money home, with a letter, every two weeks. Garfield remembers,

He never send back nothing ... I can remember, oh, help me Lord ... I can remember. I ask him one time ... if he had anything to send, and help me to progress. I think he send twenty pounds ... and told me, remember, he has a wife and children now. And as soon as I catch myself, I send back his twenty pounds. So he never send nothing, ever. Never. Ever.<sup>56</sup>



Garfield, however, believes Jeffrey has "done well" in England and it is parsimony which prevents him sending money. According to Jeffrey, his father believes,

[y]ou should be working all the time and you're making, you're earning about three times the wage that you're earning in Barbados. He always think like that, you know? ... His thing is "Well, you're in England, and you're earning three or four hundred pounds a week, and you could save three hundred pounds a week." That's his thinking all the way.<sup>57</sup>

A sense of exploitation, grievance, and lack of control pervades Garfield's narrative, commencing with his mother, who was "carried away," continuing through his father, his boss, American workers, the failure of the harvests, the friends who would not help, and finally his son who sent no money. His life was a series of misfortunes; his agenda was one of perceived failure. Garfield went regularly to America. Now, however, his life had been conflated into a shortage of luck and money and an abundance of fruitless labor. Migration had failed to give him the rewards he expected. Rather, it had left him as poor, and as abandoned, as he was as a four-month-old baby, when his mother departed to seek her fortune in Guyana.

The contradictions between their narrative accounts reflect and reinforce a mutual, though different, sense of grievance and failure. Both father and son explain their lives in terms of failed opportunity – *if only* the bumper orange harvest had been a year earlier; *if only* the pop group had made their record two months before. Like seasoned gamblers, both father and son were waiting for the big win. Even though Garfield had clearly failed to make a fortune, Jeffrey had perceived migration as the chance to do so. The themes which pervade Jeffrey's own narrative – his failure to make his fortune, his entrapment in England – are as obsessive as that of his father. Yet both maintain that the other "done well."

### CONCLUSION

Although the detail of the family histories outlined here differ, they represent ways in which a study of migration is provided with a further dimension when two or more generations are studied. First, at a structural level, the role of the family in enabling and permitting migration is clearly identified. In the studies presented here, the importance of grandparents in the raising of grandchildren is clear. The wider sample confirms the resilience and role of the "transnational" family where examples are presented of first- and second-generation British-born children being sent home to

grandparents, or family, in Barbados. Indeed, the sample begins to suggest a link between the role of the family in other areas such as the creation of cultural identity in Britain, and professional success (Chamberlain 1994b). The maintenance of links throughout migration through, in particular, remittances suggest a primary loyalty to the family, made all the more remarkable precisely when it fails to occur. It suggests also that while economic advancement, or social mobility, may have been a consideration in the desire to migrate, its locus was directed not towards metropolitan contrived notions of success, but towards home-island rewards, and a maintenance of social and family structures. It accounts also for an expectation and, in two of the cases here, realization, of return migration. It may help account for the relatively large decline in the last two decades of the Barbadian community in Britain, and suggests that the much vaunted "myth of return" may in fact have more grounding in reality than is commonly acknowledged, although the timing of that return may also be influenced in some cases by actual, or anticipated, redundancy.

The strength of family organization in supporting migration suggests, clearly, a willingness to sanction it, and a positive disposition towards it. What may appear to be a personal economic motive to migrate, often involves a *family history* of social and geographical mobility. This history, moreover, links back directly to the migration movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the particular form which such movements assumed – the conjunction of the role of the individual within the broader framework and long-term perspectives of the family, the primacy of the family in establishing a sense of independence and identity, and the flexibility of the family as an essential mechanism for so doing. Migration could be seen as an extension of what Sidney Mintz (1993:98) described as "liquid capital" and the use it could be put to "escape the plantation regimen in order to define their lives outside its iron order."

In the case of Barbados where "free labor" was effectively curtailed by the Contract Law, and where the opportunity for exploiting other skills were also limited, the notion of "liquid capital" as the mechanism of establishing both freedom and identity through family lines, was vital in the shaping of both family and culture, and remains a dominant, if obscured, dynamic in migration.

Part of the ethos is a codified family history which recounts the successes, allegiances, and the importance of various migration moves. Neither can the links between family and culture be ignored. It is, therefore, reasonable to extend the notion of a migration ethos from the family and into the broader culture, and to look at ways in which the two interrelate.

These were individuals, specific families. At the same time, the stories

conformed, or were recounted and interpreted so as to conform, to what had emerged as a wider cultural myth. From the nineteenth century, migration from Barbados was perceived as a mechanism of both asserting and achieving independence. The symbolic value and material rewards of migration were one and the same. They tended to be reinforced with each migratory movement and, as such, entered into a mythology of success (Richardson 1985; 1983). Two of the three families delineated here perceived themselves and, by any material measure, can be perceived as "successful." Migration did its job; it enabled a "better life." Disparate though the stories and motives are, they all conform to a broader consensus: migration equates with opportunity. This is the stuff of myth, the mechanism by which collective experience is expressed and explained. For the final family, migration, by the same measurable standard, has been unsuccessful. Garfield made no money; Jeffrey has experienced periods of unemployment. Yet both father and son not only persisted with their migrations but, more importantly, perceived each other to have succeeded, even though the reality suggested the opposite. Myth has become the means by which they interpreted, and made sense of, their own and each other's lives. The contradictions and the omissions are not so much evidence of "faulty" memory, but clues to unrealized dreams, to lives which require reconstruction, and as evidence of myth under construction and transformation.

The mythology of reward manifests itself in other, more oblique ways. There are, for instance, very few Barbadian folk songs which have migration as their primary theme. Given the scale of the migrations, this is surprising. But "Panama Man," one of the few which does, features return, rather than exile, suggests an expectation of wealth, rather than impoverishment. In this particular case, the returning migrant is mocked by his girlfriend because, whereas "Curaçao man ... bring me a calico dress/ When de Panama man come back to Bim/ All he bring is de Spanish caress." This may indicate how migration, for Barbadians, was not a social and cultural trauma, but a temporary expedient. By contrast, in Ireland, where migration has also been a consistent pattern, though return rare, a profound sense of loss, longing, and exile permeates traditional folk songs. Although such a comparison is speculative, it may well reflect very different cultural expectations of, and meanings ascribed to, migration.<sup>58</sup>

Britain, however, proved a tougher nut to crack. The highways of the "mother country" were not paved with gold and, contrary to all expectations (and previous migration models) return did not take place within three to five years. The migration to Britain proved to be of a longer duration. As a result, many Barbadians eventually sent for their children and/or partners from Barbados and established households and families in Britain.

The patterns of family and household which have emerged and developed over the last thirty years in Britain, however, are not dissimilar from those in the Caribbean. Such continuities suggest the strength of the family form as the most efficient way of maximizing resources. The predominance of single-parent households in the Caribbean community – 51 percent of African Caribbean mothers are reported to be lone-parents, as compared to 14 percent of the population of Britain as a whole.<sup>59</sup> – rather than reflect dysfunctionality or breakdown, may indicate the active and supportive presence of an extended family, the continuing role of grandmothers in child care, and a continuing emphasis on individuality within the family (Brockman 1987). It suggests also that the family itself may have become a statement of cultural and ethnic identity – a response to immigrant “minority” status replicating and reinforcing nineteenth-century responses to slavery and post-slavery.

Within the perspective of a migration history, Britain was merely one stop in a continuum of migratory destinations. Yet Britain was different. Britain was the “mother country”; many Barbadians knew more about the geography, history, and literature of Britain than they did of Barbados. John Arlott was as familiar a voice to them, as he was to the British. Britain, nevertheless, was a culture shock, and the difficulties encountered in the mother country were played down, and even denied, in letters home. This was partly so as not to cause worry. Most of the migrants – as in other migrations – were young people, leaving behind both elderly parents, and/or young children. But the silence also served to perpetuate the notion of improvement which should ensue not merely from migration, but in this case from migration “home,” to the “mother country.” At the same time, oral evidence suggests that previous migrations, particularly to Panama and North America, were also beset with difficulties, primarily of loneliness and discrimination which, for whatever reason, were also carefully concealed and protected by secrecy. Britain was different, but in this sense, not that different. This suggests the need to perpetuate, and reinforce, the particular mythology of success surrounding migration, by suppressing individual anxieties and hardships both for the greater family good, and to maintain the family reputation if, as seems the case, that reputation and status was largely built on the successful migration of individual members. Evidence from the interviews confirms a reluctance to return to Barbados unless substantial material improvements can be shown.

This particular notion – of improvement and mobility – has been highlighted here because components of it were appropriated by government agencies, and find echoes in models of migration. It is not, however, the only dynamic. It may, finally, not be the most important one. In Ursula’s

family, for instance, the relationship between color and mobility is well articulated and engages directly with the rewards of migration. In Jasper's family, the connection between land, independence, and mobility suggests more than a material connection. The theme of abandonment also figures centrally. All the families, though in very different ways, were shaped by it. Equally, the motif of denial and exclusion – of opportunity, of parental love – recurs throughout the narratives. In many ways these may be the melodies of the universal migrant. But they may also be specific to the Caribbean, and a cultural history shaped by slavery – whose resonances found easy analogy between biblical myths of liberation and movement, emancipation and mobility, diaspora and return on the one hand,<sup>60</sup> and on the other, in Bible teachings of stoicism, patience, and deferred rewards in the final migratory destination of heaven.

Family stories are beginning to reveal the complex social and symbolic relationship between these cultural components. What is clear is that by reorientating migration studies backwards in time, sideways to the home, (as opposed to the host culture), downwards to family migration experience, and away from official and governmental sources, migration, at least from Barbados, appears as the norm, not a departure from it. It appears as located within the structure, culture, and history of the island. From that perspective, what may appear to be deviant migrant behavior in the metropole, may conform to an internal logic of migration survival strategies, translated and transformed by subsequent generations.<sup>61</sup>

Perhaps a family history can return a study of migration to the island of its birth, rather than that of its destination. In this way, it may be possible to measure more precisely the differences between migration movements in terms of culture and practice, motivation and expectation, settlement and return. It may also throw new light on the aspirations and behavior of second and third British-born generations by locating their lifestyles and living arrangements within a migration history, and pave the way for comparative studies with other communities in Europe and North America where, in particular, the longevity of the community has revealed significant characteristics which we may begin to see replicated in Europe. Elements of transnationalism and a continuing link with the Caribbean across generations can be identified in Britain, as it has in the United States, which suggest that the development of those communities may depend only partly on their reception in the host society. They may also be displaying resilient, and autonomous, characteristics which are peculiar to Caribbean migration and the culture which gave rise to, and has derived from, it.

## NOTES

1. I am grateful to the Nuffield Foundation whose grant enabled me to undertake this research and to the Department of Archives, Barbados for their help and support.
2. M. Chamberlain, Barbados Plantation Tenantry System tapes, GA 1/1/5-6, Dept. of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.
3. Office of Population Census and Survey of England and Wales (OPCS).
4. Percentage figures quoted in Peach 1991.
5. Figures calculated from Caribbean census and OPCS census data.
6. UK census returns 1971, 1981, 1991, OPCS.
7. Figures computed from UK census returns 1981-1991, OPCS.
8. See also Ardener 1989; Davis 1989; Tonkin 1992.
9. For analysis of second-generation responses see Chamberlain 1994a.
10. Pseudonyms have been used throughout this article.
11. B9/1/A/19. All extracts from the Barbados Migration Project (M. Chamberlain). Tapes and transcripts deposited with the National Life Story Collection of the National Sound Archive at the British Library. References refer to interview number, tape number, side, and transcript page number.
12. B9/1/A/20.
13. B5/1/A/48.
14. B9/1/A/9.
15. B9/1/A/20.
16. B5/1/A/11.
17. B5/1/A/3.
18. B5/1/A/3.
19. For a fuller exposition of this argument see Greenfield 1983.
20. B9/1/A/16.
21. See for instance *The Barbados Emigration Commission Report 1895*, Department of Archives, Barbados.
22. B18/1/A/10-11.
23. B18/1/A/3-4.
24. B18/1/A/13.
25. B18/1/A/14.
26. B18/1/A/5-6.
27. B18/1/A/7.
28. B18/1/A/13.

29. B18/1/A/4.
30. B18/1/A/17.
31. B18/1/B/27.
32. B18/1/B/34.
33. B18/1/B/27.
34. B18/1/A/2.
35. B18/1/B/29. In other families from the sample, children were sent back to their grandmothers in Barbados. Ursula's was the only family where the grandmother came to England to look after the children.
36. B18/1/B/28.
37. B18/1/B/31. Winston James (1986) has also looked at this issue.
38. B19/1/A/4.
39. B19/1/A/3, 9.
40. B19/1/A/10.
41. BB2/1/A/12, 50.
42. This characteristic was referred to frequently in correspondence between the Barbados Immigrants Liaison Office in London and the Labor Commissioner in Barbados, correspondence 1957-63, Department of Archives, Barbados. It was, of course, a double edged sword for skilled laborers maintained the high "calibre" and "reputation" of Barbadians in Britain, while draining Barbados of scarce resources.
43. BB2/1/A/20.
44. BB2/1/A/21.
45. BB2/1/A/28.
46. BB2/2/A/61.
47. BB2/2/A/67.
48. B6/1/A/1.
49. B6/1/A/3.
50. BB2/1/A/3.
51. B6/1/A/7-9.
52. BB2/1/B/31.
53. BB2/1/B/36.
54. B6/1/A/11.
55. BB2/1/A/8.
56. B6/1/A/12.
57. BB2/2/A/66.

58. My thanks to Alun Howkins and the Barbadian Calysonian "The Mighty Gabby" (Tony Carter) with whom I discussed this issue.
59. 1991 census of United Kingdom and Wales, OPCS.
60. My thanks to Catherine Hall for pointing out this connection. The different historical experiences of slavery and post-slavery in Jamaica and Barbados may also be reflected in religious experience and practice. While Biblical myths of liberation were more powerful in Jamaica, where they conformed more readily to actual experience and to a pronounced history of slave resistance, in Barbados the religious emphasis most readily adopted was on stoicism and deferred reward.
61. This theme is touched on by Stuart Hall (1990:222) who suggests that the New World itself constitutes a "narrative of displacement" where diaspora identities constantly produce and reproduce.

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SCHOLARSHIP OR SOLIDARITY?  
THE POST-EMANCIPATION ERA IN THE  
CARIBBEAN RECONSIDERED<sup>1</sup>

From a reading of Michael Craton's (1994) recent contribution to this journal on slave emancipation in the Bahamas, one is struck by two things. First, we have come a long way in the historical study of slavery compared with the analysis of the post-emancipation period. Over the past thirty years we have amassed a mountain of materials covering virtually all aspects of the system of slavery. As a consequence we have been able to reach a large degree of consensus on slavery in the U.S. South, the Caribbean, and Brazil. Of course, certain differences of interpretation remain. For example, we still have not solved all the riddles on issues such as the demographic decline of the slave populations in the tropical regions of the New World or the survival of African norms and values in these parts.

The second conclusion which can be reached from Craton's article is that the recent findings on the history of slavery have as yet not had much impact on our interpretation of the post-emancipation period. Unfortunately, this is a serious problem since the period after slavery in the Caribbean (or in Northeastern Brazil for that matter) is difficult to document. Those who could write or had to write, such as colonial civil servants and the planters, gave much less attention to the freedmen than they had devoted to the slaves. In documentary terms the exception was the period of apprenticeship in the British and Dutch Caribbean, when elaborate reports were filed in order to inform the respective parliaments about the impact of their various rules and regulations governing the period of transition. Because of the lack of documentation we have not been able to discover what exactly happened to the ex-slaves once they had left the plantations.

Why did freedmen leave, and how can we describe their subsequent

cultural, demographic, and socio-economic development? In view of the dearth of data we have to rely on circumstantial evidence and common sense. Thus it is of the utmost importance to use our new insights into the nature of the Caribbean slave societies to test interpretations of these same societies during the period after slavery. Admittedly, this procedure will not entirely make up for the lack of information, but it will help us to ask more relevant questions. While we might be approaching the "end of history" in the historiography of slavery, Craton's interpretation of the post-emancipation period differs so widely from my own (Emmer 1992), that we certainly have not reached this point in writing about the subsequent period.

In many ways the historiography of the post-emancipation societies is still as heavily dominated by the ideology of the abolitionists as was once the case with the literature on slavery. The abolitionists perceived the post-emancipation period as a big disappointment. The planters' pessimistic predictions about a dramatic decline in the sugar output had proved to be realistic. Many ex-slaves had left the plantations and did not seem to develop into the hard-working, God abiding peasantry that Wilberforce had hoped for (Hind 1987). Unwilling to admit that the fault lay with the unrealistic assessments on their own part, the abolitionists blamed the planters as well as the colonial and home governments. In principle, the ending of the terrible and inefficient system of slavery should have produced progress on all fronts. That the freedmen should have experienced stagnation, or even decline, in their living and working conditions could only be caused by obstinacy or obstruction on the part of the planters and the colonial civil servants (Green 1985:183-202).

This traditional view had a long tenure. It continues to constitute the basis of Craton's analysis of the period of emancipation in the Bahamas. Since his case study brings in other parts of the Caribbean, his perspective can be fruitfully compared with the new historiography of slavery. I will not attempt to interpret the post-slavery period of the Bahamas in particular, as I lack the expertise that Craton has acquired during his long years of archival research on these islands. In addition, I will not expand too much time on some of Craton's broader concepts such as "proto-peasant" and "proto-proletarian." These terms are constructs that impede rather than increase our understanding of what happened. Craton himself seems to feel ill at ease in using these ahistoric abstractions.<sup>2</sup> There is no clear definition of these terms. On p. 24, slaves as well as freedmen could exhibit "features of both proto-peasants and proto-proletarian behavior." while on the next page Craton reduces the Caribbean social structure to two classes: capitalists and their workers. Yet, on page 27 we learn of still

another Caribbean social creature, the "part-proletarian" and "part-peasant" who constitutes a "breach" in the "slave mode of production," or on p. 32 a "cash labor breach." In addition, we encounter in quick succession "an effective proletariat," a "true proletarian sector," "would-be peasants," "laboring classes," people living "a pure peasant lifestyle," and "squatters." Fortunately for the reader, at the very end, the author leaves most of these self-imposed categories behind and returns to a two-class Caribbean society consisting of an "underclass" and "a capitalist bourgeoisie." I will also use a simple two-part division by first analyzing the post-emancipation developments among the Caribbean elite, the employers, the colonial and metropolitan civil servants, and then the position of the freedmen and that of the indentured immigrant laborers.

### THE ELITE

In the traditional historiography the planters are usually depicted as the *bêtes noires*. They are accused of clinging on to an old-fashioned and wasteful labor system, in which slaves are status symbols first and factors of production second. The new interpretation of slavery, however, has turned this view upside down. The planters appear to have been efficient managers of the most expansive economies at the time. It seems strange to imagine – as Craton does – that on the eve of emancipation the planters suddenly lost most of their managerial qualities: by trying to create an inefficient labor pool; by monopolizing all the land; charging rents for the use of cottages and garden plots; trying to create an "ideal" workforce consisting of a "minimal nucleus of faithful retainers throughout the year and for sufficient male laborers to be available when they were wanted" (p. 47); and exacting so much labor that the reproduction – let alone a natural increase – of the labor force was impossible (p. 27).

Unfortunately, none of these suppositions are accompanied by sufficient evidence. Indeed, on page 48, Craton himself destroys the myth that on the larger islands the planters could obtain rents for the use of cottages and customary grounds and that they could monopolize the land by emphasizing the large tracts of unoccupied land and the fact that: "In many cases, the planters did not even discourage squatting on lands they technically owned." In the following pages of his article Craton again returns to the myth of "dear land" by pointing to the difficulty to squat on Crown lands (p. 56) and by drawing attention to the new and very strict vagrancy laws (p. 49). He fails to point out, however, that originally such vagrancy laws were designed to keep the poor in Europe in check, where there actually were means to enforce these laws (Rogers 1994). On

the larger Caribbean islands – as well as in the Guianas – these vagrancy laws were not enforceable. In order to support his own argument Craton would have had to provide figures indicating a gigantic increase in the size of the colonial police and army, but in reality such an increase never took place in the West Indies. Actually, relative to Western Europe the very modest size of the police and the army hardly changed after emancipation. The eviction of 45 squatters per year on Jamaica during the period 1869-1900 is extremely low in relation to an ex-slave population of more than 300,000 (p. 57). In sum, the logic of Craton's argument can be reversed: in comparison with the underclass in most parts of Europe the ex-slaves in the Caribbean had relatively ample access to land.

There is little doubt that the planters would have liked to possess all the power they have been credited with. This is particularly true regarding the slave demography. In this domain the omnipotence attributed to the planters seems to reach supernatural dimensions (p. 27). Craton actually seems to assume that the planters could throw the switch from negative to positive demographic growth by simply reducing the workload. The whole complicated riddle of the demographic performance of New World slave populations has been reduced to one simple cause: the malevolence of the planters! Of course, Craton knows full well that the workload was only one of the factors involved. Recent research tends to stress the importance of the constant influx of dangerous pathogens into the Caribbean disease environment, especially from West Africa. That would explain why slaves or ex-slaves in areas without many additional arrivals from elsewhere had decreasing mortality rates. In addition, the length of the lactation period, the diet, the sex ratio as well as medical care and – indeed – the type of crop and the workload also influenced mortality (Fogel 1989).

Craton's final arguments to prove the planters' urge to degrade their ex-slaves must also be analyzed here. In Craton's view the planters remained "despotic," "autocratic" and somehow unable to abandon their penchant for creating a loyal rather than an economical workforce. This view of the planters is not based on many of the relevant recent findings. First of all, Craton still seems to be reluctant to acknowledge that during several decades before emancipation the planters succeeded in carrying out a productivity revolution. He acknowledges that the slaves, by negotiating with the planters, had been able to obtain a substantial share of the new profits, but only a simultaneous rise in productivity can solve a puzzle which Craton cannot address. He notes (p. 31) that during the decades just prior to emancipation the slaves seemed to be performing less physical labor while, during the same period, substantial amounts of planter money

and time were spent on providing them with more food, and better housing and medical care (Ward 1988:190-232). The modern labor histories of Western Europe and North America, their evidence of long term rising wages and less work must be equally puzzling to Craton.

After emancipation, the planters continued to manage increases in the productivity of their plantations in order to combat rising labor costs and international competition. This caused the price of their cash crops to go down on the market for consumers. As Craton indicates the planters tried to apply their traditional successful formula by continuing to improve the milling and refining procedures. In addition, by using jobbing gangs the planters seemed to have invented another ingredient for their policy to minimize the amount of labor during the slack season. Had they been successful in this, they would have been imitating the management of agricultural labor in Europe at the time, where the workforce of the larger farms had a nucleus of permanent laborers aided by temporary migratory gangs during the harvest time (Hall 1959:157-58). In all this there is no indication whatsoever that the planters allowed themselves to ride their personal hobby horses by putting personal power, reliability or anything else above efficiency.

However, it is not at all certain that the market for plantation labor in most colonies in the Caribbean was dominated by the planters. Only such a position would permit "despotism." In hiring indentured labor from Asia most planters seemed to be willing to engage many more laborers than were required as a nuclear workforce. The planters seemed to have preferred to pay for the immigration of as many expensive indentureds as would guarantee sufficient labor in order to satisfy their maximum demand during the harvest time. This indicates that the nuclear workforce system was not a persistent preference of the planters and that over time the supply and not the demand has shaped the labor markets in most of the post-emancipation Caribbean. After an initial period of trial and error the formula of a nuclear workforce combined with jobbing gangs had no alternative because of the way in which the freedmen preferred to supply labor. Most Caribbean employers wanted to move away from it because they were unable to tune the arrival of these jobbing gangs to their needs. In fact, in his own study of Worthy Park Craton (1978:281-313) himself shows that the management of this estate was unable to get sufficient labor during the 1840s in spite of making considerable investments, giving up its attempts to charge rents for the cottages and garden plots and offering employment throughout the year. Unlike Craton's suggestions to the contrary, the planters could expect little help from the colonial governments in disciplining the ex-slave labor force. Lack of personnel,

metropolitan abolitionist pressures, and the relatively easy access to land all made it impossible for the West Indian governments to imitate the governments of Western Europe in their attempts to create a labor force which was responsive to monetary incentives (Engerman 1992:60-65). Even in Haiti, the only Caribbean society where no responsibility for the post-emancipation outcome can be attributed to the planters, the elite despaired of resurrecting the plantations by employing the ex-slaves as free laborers. The government of Haiti actually reinstated some kind of forced labor and even made its own plans to import indentured laborers from Asia (Nicholls 1985:95-100).

Another indication of the relatively strong position of the freedmen on the labor market is provided by Craton when he mentions the massive internal migrations between the plantations and – after the ending of apprenticeship – away from the plantations. Each year the planters feared that they would be unable to have enough labor for the harvest, since many freedmen had the habit of changing jobs or leaving the plantation exactly at those critical periods, which were decisive for the profitability of the plantations (Emmer 1993:91-92). I have a suspicion that Craton is unaware that the flexibility of the planters to switch from labor intensive to labor saving production methods was severely curtailed by the fact that – at least until the 1930s – the technology of harvesting sugar cane could not be changed as was possible with milling and refining. Until the arrival of harvesting machines and tractors cutting and planting cane remained extremely labor intensive to the chagrin of both the planters and the freedmen. This suspicion is reinforced by Craton's erroneous notion that the planters had ample economic room in which to maneuver. He assumes that the Caribbean planters would not go bankrupt by offering higher wages, in addition to providing for the ineffective family members of his laborers, by allowing his laborers more time to tend their own private plots, and by providing better housing and more social services in general.

In sum, historians will have to allow that some of the planters' actions were caused by their desire to remain in business and that this desire considerably narrowed their options. In his article, Craton provides us with further indications of his peculiar perspective on post-emancipation economic history. He assumes that the Caribbean became *more* incorporated into the world economy during the course of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, rapidly declining exports after emancipation are an indication of exactly the opposite trend. Non-slave grown Caribbean sugar met with fierce competition, both from slave grown Cuban and Brazilian sugar, but also from new sugar producers in Asia and (later in the century) in Europe (Ward 1988:238-41). Since he writes that slavery merely "lingered on"



(p. 23), it seems doubtful that Craton has yet grasped the economic fact that, after British emancipation, the remaining slave economies of the mid-nineteenth century made the U.S. South, Brazil, and Cuba into areas with some of the highest growth rates in the world of that time and into some of the most powerful competitors of the post-emancipation Caribbean.

Craton's view on the plantation is muddled. It is not clear whether he would have preferred a development in which the plantations had disappeared overnight, forcing all freedmen to become peasants. In a sense this is just what happened in Haiti, which, according to Craton was "largely spared the trammels of developing world capitalism" (p. 24). Except for Craton the benefits of this option must have been invisible to everyone else, since Haiti quickly ceased to be extolled as the shining example of an exemplary economic alternative in the Caribbean. Lacking the relevant direct data, the only way in which we can make some assumptions about the viability of the Haitian peasant economy is by looking at immigration and emigration. For migrants from within and outside the Caribbean region Haiti was not a popular destination. During the nineteenth century the majority of the free labor migrants within the Caribbean region went to the Panama Canal and to Cuba. Craton has as little grasp of the perspective of the post-slavery laborer as of the post-slavery planter. Had Michael Craton as a freedman chosen Haiti in order to escape the arrogance of the planters, the strikes and rebellions, the lack of social services, the absence of a general franchise and the difficulty of obtaining sufficient land, he would have been migrating from the frying pan into the fire.

By the 1830s, Haitian sugar production had virtually ended, although cotton and coffee were still being grown for export. Not a single plantation remained intact. Throughout the nineteenth century, Haiti had the lowest percentage of landless laborers of any Caribbean island. The Haitian freedmen had won their battle for the soil, but the outcome was, at best, a Pyrrhic victory. The history of Haiti for the remainder of the century was a melancholy saga of political instability and economic stagnation. The peasantry remained illiterate, impoverished, and politically powerless. Its lands were divided and subdivided, its economy, despite a flourishing system of internal markets, remained largely subsistence-oriented. The state's fiscal and credit policies stifled the growth of the peasant economy and turned its self-sufficiency to the advantage of a bureaucracy that saw in the masses only a source of tax revenues (Foner 1983:12).

Was the public sector in the other parts of the Caribbean much different from the one on Haiti? According to Michael Craton, the colonial government conspired with the plantocracy, the imperial policy-makers and even the missionaries "to fix the peasant and laboring classes in a Gramscian

hegemonic grip" (p. 41). It is unclear exactly what such a grip entails, but the supposition that the government and the employers would cooperate closely during the early nineteenth century seems a realistic one for most societies at the time. The size of the civil service was extremely limited everywhere and the finances for an increase of an independent bureaucracy were simply not available.

Yet, if ever such an increase was necessary, it was in the post-emancipation slave societies in the New World, where the (colonial) state suddenly was faced by a dramatic increase in the number of its subjects at the very moment of emancipation. The planters and the plantations ceased to offer or were forced to suspend many services which, in non-slave societies, had to be provided for by the government or by private charities. These included food and housing for orphaned children, the poor and the old-aged; medical and hospital care; civil and penal justice; tax collection and education. To provide all of these components of welfare the various local administrative and judicial bodies would have had to be enlarged and staffed by new personnel, preferably recruited from outside plantation America and imbued with the abolitionist ideology.

In view of the obvious disparity between demands and means, the increase in the provision of government services in the West Indies seems remarkable compared to the level of government intervention in the metropole. In fact, government expenditure in the Dutch Caribbean could not be fully financed by taxation despite the fact that emancipation also had created many potential tax payers. Additional subsidies from the metropole were needed, both public and private. I doubt whether this situation was much different in the British, French, and Danish Caribbean. Comparative research is needed here. In any event, it seems clear that the financial and ideological constraints on the role of the government at the time made for continuity, and precluded an increase in the provision of social and judicial services in plantation America, reaching the standards of today. In comparison with the level of government intervention in society in general at the time, however, governmental attempts at influencing labor and living conditions of the freedmen in the Caribbean were considerable and – no doubt due to the abolitionist pressures from the metropole – perhaps less in favor of the employers than was the case in nineteenth-century Europe.

#### THE FREEDMEN AND THE INDENTURED LABORERS

Most of the existing literature regarding the post-slavery period conveys a deep feeling of disappointment and Michael Craton's contribution on the Bahamas is no exception. For many freedmen the ultimate moment of

liberation never seems to have arrived. Rather than a dramatic cleavage between slavery and freedom, continuity seems to have been the main characteristic of the transition period.

Recent insights into the economics of slavery explain why continuity seems indeed more likely than revolutionary change. As the productivity of sugar cane agriculture was steadily increasing, the other opportunities in the Caribbean economy became less and less attractive. On the eve of emancipation there were virtually no employers waiting outside the plantations seeking to offer the freedmen alternative jobs at higher wages. Only in the less competitive plantation areas as well as in those areas where export agriculture was not the dominant sector did the ex-slaves escape a decline in income by leaving the plantations and going into small-scale subsistence agriculture where they were self-employed.

Most slaves, however, had been employed in areas where export agriculture reigned supreme, and where a rapid rise in productivity provided the planters with the means to meet the demands of both the slaves and the colonial and metropolitan governments for equally rapid improvements in living and working conditions. This is why the "flight" from the plantations needs a more careful analysis than Craton provides. Since the freedmen could offer their labor on a market in which the planters had to compete, it seems difficult to explain why so many ex-slaves quickly withdrew from that market, first the women and children, later followed by the men. It seems doubtful that these women and children earned more in subsistence agriculture than as employees. Again, comparative analysis is necessary. At the same time and for similar economic reasons the number of wage earners among women, children, and men in *Europe* steadily increased. It should be emphasized that after emancipation the rewards paid for plantation labor were distributed differently from the way in which this was done during the times of slavery. The redistributive element inherent to the system of slavery was strongly reduced and the link between the amount of labor and its rewards strengthened. The old, the young, and the infirm all had received food, clothing, housing, and medical care, regardless whether these groups provided labor. After slavery, the young, strong, and healthy who remained on the plantation could earn considerably more than before. Craton's remark that the transfer of the responsibility for the non-productive freedmen to their family members made it somehow "a necessity" for the ex-slaves to take up subsistence agriculture is a *non-sequitur* (p. 47). When in need of more income, the freedmen should have exploited the labor option on the plantations to its fullest extent. There is reason to assume that in several regions in the Caribbean the freedmen could have forced the plantation management to raise the general wage

level to equality (or even somewhat beyond) with the cost of importing indentured laborers from British India and China.

On the other hand, research regarding the economies of the peasant sector after emancipation in the Caribbean clearly reveals the freedmen's disastrously inefficient division and inheritance of land. Equally detrimental to the development of a viable farming sector were the voluntary non-use and communal use of land by the freedmen and the clear absence of an agricultural avant-garde committed to developing this sector, which could have improved plant breeding, imported new technology, and explored new ways of marketing their produce (Ward 1985:57; Besson 1987:14-31, 1995:113-15). In comparison, it is striking to note that later during the nineteenth century the ex-indentured laborers from India were indeed able to turn small-scale farming into a relatively successful sector of the Caribbean economy.

Obviously we are not able to fully grasp the economic choices made by the freedmen until we have more information regarding the alternatives to working on a plantation. The crux of the matter might have been that the system of slavery had never induced the slaves to maximize their incomes and that the freedmen thus gave priority to cultural and psychological preferences when leaving the plantations (Holt 1992:146-68). It should be stressed, however, that virtually all of the alternatives to plantation labor could only be found in agriculture. As most parts of the world during the last century, the Caribbean could not develop and support a substantial non-agricultural sector. In choosing to move away from the plantations after emancipation, the ex-slaves might not have been aware of the fact that they were cutting the ties with the most reliable employment sector in the contemporary economy. In the Caribbean, small-scale farming provided the freedmen with no more than a subsistence income, comparable to that of a Third World peasant today (Klein & Engerman 1985:261-65).

However, in Craton's view the plantations in the West Indies could do no good. As the ex-slaves seemed to hate plantation labor, retrospectively everybody else should do the same. Thus, the massive influx of indentured laborers from Asia can only be explained as a temporary anomaly or aberration. Migrating Asians must have been lured away, given the wrong information by crooks and criminals. Not only was the power of the planters unbroken after emancipation, it was growing and even seemed to have extended to the other side of the globe capturing hundreds of thousands of "new slaves" in its tentacles.

In this regard, as with the analysis of the transition from slavery, Craton again seems to have embraced the now outdated view of the abolitionists. He simply ignores a whole new body of revisionist literature regarding the

Asian migration movements of the nineteenth century. The abolitionists' racial assumption that more than a million Asian migrants were of such limited intellectual capacities as to be misled for the duration of almost a century, deliberately choosing to destroy themselves, was erroneous. In reality the lure of the powerful earning potential of plantation work can be deduced from the massive influx of Asian migrants to the Caribbean. They could have opted to go to many destinations in Africa and Asia, as well to others within India itself. In view of the new findings concerning the major migratory milestones of Indian immigration into the Caribbean: mortality en route and on the plantations, stature, savings, return migration etc. it now seems misleading to compare Asian immigration to the slave trade. In his description of Indian immigration Craton does not take account of the new research, which makes it possible to stress that improvements over time were considerable and that the British Indian government always suspended migration when there was an inexplicable increase in mortality either aboard ship or on the plantations (Emmer 1986; Shlomowitz & Brennan 1994).

As mentioned previously there is no proof that planters only ordered as many indentured laborers as needed in order to create a small, nuclear workforce. There are also no indications that Indian indentured laborers were constantly replaced by new imports simply in order to boost the socio-political power of the planters regardless of the costs. On the contrary, evidence shows that planters were rather keen on reindenturing East Indians already in the colony rather than ordering the recruitment of new laborers from India. Craton's account again flies in the face of the evidence.

The final issue requiring discussion relates to the various revolts and rebellions in the Caribbean. Understandably, these events feature prominently in the article under review, since Craton (1982) himself has published an authoritative study containing a comprehensive survey of slave unrest in the British Caribbean. In looking at the various revolts and rebellions after the ending of slavery, Craton concludes that slaves, freedmen, and indentured laborers fought a continuous and similar struggle against the planters.

As a preliminary observation I would stress that all human communities were and are plagued by internal tensions. I am not so sure whether from the time of Columbus onwards, more people (excepting the Amerindians) were affected by wars, civil wars, revolts, revolutions, and strikes in the Caribbean than in Europe. In fact, there is good reason to assume that virtually all societies in the colonial New World even including the slave societies in the Caribbean, were fortunate in having relatively little vio-

lence affecting relatively limited areas.

Surveying the post-slavery period the various rebellions and revolts in the Caribbean also seem rather mild and infrequent in comparison with the dramatic political and labor unrest in nineteenth-century Europe. Craton – in spite of his expertise on this topic – fails to indicate that most of the post-slavery insurrections in the Caribbean were simply proof of the fact that the tensions of a slave society had been replaced by those of a free society. For example, there is ample evidence that one of the most important causes of the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica and of the Angel Gabriel Riots in British Guiana can be attributed to the fact that the ex-slaves had not been and were not prepared to cope simultaneously with a constantly changing labor market as well as a changing market for consumer goods in addition to facing yet another novelty: having to pay their share for the rapidly growing number of government services (Ward 1988: 244; Green 1976:381-82).

Of course, by 1876 when the poor in Barbados took to the streets, the freedmen must have grown accustomed to the new conditions and demands on the various markets in which they had to operate. However, as with other human groups they seem not to have been able to easily resign themselves to the fact that their previous standard of living had declined, that their political power remained very small, and that the colonial government was not providing more services. It is not clear, however, which level of income and political influence Michael Craton would have judged to have been “sufficient” for the Barbadian poor, and it is unclear on what grounds he assumes that their position was exceptionally bad in view of the fact that their grievances constitute a perfect description of the situation faced by the majority of laborers in most parts of Europe: lack of land; unemployment; below subsistence wage levels; deaths from starvation; an inequitable system of justice; harsh police regime and disgraceful conditions in prisons and workhouses; almost no social services; and a complete lack of political representation (p. 61).

All this begs the question as to why in Craton’s view the planters can do no good and the freedmen nothing wrong and why he continues to see the Caribbean plantations as the blood-sucking leeches at the periphery of world capitalism. One explanation could be found in the fact that in the post-emancipation Caribbean the planters were so much more powerful and the freedmen so much more weaker than the present-day labor relations – at least in the West – would have allowed for. In comparison with the general state of labor relations in the nineteenth century, however, that observation could well be reversed and only the latter comparison makes any sense. Therefore, in view of Craton’s distinguished record as a profes-

sional historian we must look for another explanation. I have a suspicion that Craton's judgements are founded in the strong desire to show that his heart is with the "underclass" or the "proto's." Thus he hobbles his own historical imagination and undermines our ability to find out *sine ira et studio*, what really happened in the post-emancipation Caribbean.

#### NOTES

1 My sincere thanks go to Seymour Drescher, Stanley Engerman, Gert Oostindie and Ralph Shlomowitz for their comments, suggestions, and remarks. My indebtedness to them does not imply that they agree with my arguments or bear any responsibility for what I say.

2 For a parallel discussion regarding the danger of using historical constructs in explaining the rise of abolitionism see Davis 1992.

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RESPONSE TO PIETER C. EMMER'S  
"RECONSIDERATION"

Criticisms, however strongly expressed, are valuable where they extend and deepen debates. Pieter Emmer's critique, though, is so ill focused, ill informed, and intemperate, that it is difficult to know how to respond profitably, or even politely.

Emmer begins badly by referring to my article as being "on slave emancipation in the Bahamas" rather than on the British West Indies as a whole over an entire century. He compounds this by a lack of clarity about quite what area and period he is referring to at a given time. He fails to distinguish clearly (as my article did) between British colonies and other territories, between sugar plantation colonies and others, and between different types of sugar colony; nor does he acknowledge the vital importance (stressed in the prologue to my article) of relating events and changes in the British imperial orbit to those in other areas and empires and in the world at large.

For someone who dismisses my use of such well-established terms as "proto-peasant" and "proto-proletarian" as "ahistoric abstractions" that "impede rather than increase our understanding of what happened," Emmer's own employment of such cloudy terms as "the elite" and "the freedmen" is specially unfortunate, as is his conflationary use of the label "planters." The first two tend to ignore such important intermediate categories as poor whites, missionaries and magistrates, non-whites free before emancipation, Liberated Africans, and migrants of different races both before and after 1838; the third to exclude the class which Howard Johnson (1991) has called an "agro-commercial bourgeoisie," which was

particularly important in non-plantation colonies and town settings. Emmer's concentration on plantations and planters, indeed, leaves out such matters necessary for a comprehensive analysis as share-cropping, truck payment systems (found in all forms of employment), and the increasing role of towns in the development of relations between employers and employed.

Even more confusing is Emmer's use of the term "abolitionist," (pp. 278, 287) seemingly (though I am not entirely sure) applied alike (and in a generally derogatory sense) to those who favored slave emancipation, who brought it about, and who have a certain interpretation of it (including, perhaps, myself). Far clearer, cruder, and more revealing of his own position, are his concluding remarks that in my account "the planters could do no good and the freedmen nothing wrong," that the Caribbean plantations were "the blood-sucking leeches at the periphery of world capitalism" and that my "judgements are founded in the strong desire to show that ... [my] heart is with the 'underclass.'" This contumely at least has the merit of showing Emmer in his true colors, as the kind of free market liberal who as an historian empathizes with the planters in their quest for efficiency and profit, to the degree that he will argue against the evidence that this was of actual benefit to plantation employees.

Emmer states as a given a "productivity revolution" before abolition that is at the least debatable. Apart from the fact that total sugar production in the old established British sugar islands actually declined and that when divided by their total slave populations productivity in these islands can be said to have decreased, what Emmer's definition of increased productivity obscures is both that production was concentrated in the colonies and areas that were optimal for sugar production to the detriment of those less favored, and that it was a desperate expedient in the face of declining world prices, which in turn were due to competition from non-British areas and the gradual removal of protection. In crediting the changes in production techniques entirely to the planters, Emmer, moreover, ignores the facts that they were, at least in part, forced upon them by the British West Indian laborers' disinclination to work as slaves and by the prolongation of the slave trade to competing areas, and that they were achieved at the slaves' expense – in terms of health and mortality as well as enforced labor. British slave owners almost universally opposed both the abolition of the slave trade and emancipation, neglecting the slaves in unprofitable areas as much as they were allowed to, or shifting them to more profitable colonies as long as that was legal, while extracting as much work as they could elsewhere, whether in the new fertile colonies (like Trinidad and the Guianas), those with struggling plantations (like Jamaica),

or those (like Barbados and Antigua), where, because of their monopoly of the land, the planters' control over the slaves was almost absolute.

In looking at the situation after slavery ended, Emmer loads his case by the exaggerated statement that very little is known about the post-emancipation era compared with the slavery period. This intends to devalue both my present article and another (1992) on the Caribbean as a whole, which were at pains to survey and promote the considerable body of work that has in fact appeared over the last four decades – by Alan Adamson, Hilary Beckles and Andrew Downes, Robin Blackburn, Nigel Bolland, Peter Boomgaard and Gert Oostindie, Bridget Brereton, Patrick Bryan, Russell Chace, Mary Chamberlain, Edward Cox, Richard Frucht, Douglas Hall, Kusha Haraksingh, Gad Heuman, Howard Johnson, Cecilia Karch, Keith Laurence, Claude Levy, Richard Lobdell, Walton Look Lai, Roderick McDonald, Jay Mandle, Woodville Marshall, Trevor Marshall and Bentley Gibbs, Sidney Mintz, Brian Moore, Bonham Richardson, Walter Rodney, Veront Satchell, Monica Schuler, Verene Shepherd, Lorna Simmonds, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Swithin Wilmot and others (none of whom Emmer cites), as well as by Gail Saunders and myself. In place of these he mentions "recent" and "revisionary" scholarship (usually unspecified in detail) which is presumed to validate his own interpretations – including what are to my mind an erroneously favorable view of the indentured labor system and an underestimation of the depth and breadth of popular resistance to an overbearing economic and political system (pp. 287-88).

I apologize if Emmer's difficulties with the concepts of premature formations which he labels "the proto's" are genuine. If such a specialist is puzzled, the ordinary reader surely requires more elucidation. Perhaps too readily I presumed common knowledge that "proletarian" (even for non-Marxists) means landless wage laborer tending towards factory and urban employment, and that (following Sidney Mintz) "peasant" means a countryman with at least access to land of his own, working in a family unit as independently as possible, given the need for a margin somewhat above subsistence and a dependence on local if not export marketing. Against what Emmer seems to assume, however, my formulation depends not so much on the distinct categories of peasant and proletarian as on the existence in the post-emancipation West Indies of a distinct type, the peasant/proletarian – ideally (from the point of view of the black majority but not of the white elite) having both land of their own and the capacity to work for satisfactory wages at times when it suited them best.

Thus, by extension backwards, proto-peasant and proto-proletarian activity in slavery times denoted not necessarily the emergence of two

distinct types, but the degree to which slaves in general were able both to work land virtually as their own, in families, for self-subsistence and obtaining of a cash surplus in local markets, and also to negotiate the terms and realize at least some of the cash value of their labor for the estate owners and town employers. Pondering on the recent work of Roderick McDonald (1993) about the changes in slaves' material culture towards the end of formal slavery (in Jamaica and Louisiana), I would even, without apologies to Emmer, suggest the addition to the "proto's" of the concept of slaves as "proto-consumers," in respect of the way in which an increasing involvement in and dependence on world markets and the products of industrial capitalism, gradually changed both the lifestyle and expectations of slaves, perhaps helping to speed emancipation in the process.

Given his pro-planter, pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist view, it is to be expected that Emmer and I should see some of the facts, events, and trends in different lights. It is perhaps inevitable that he would massage the statistics and adjust the facts to bring them in line with his general interpretation. Some of such instances are of the relativistic "half-full rather than half-empty" type, but others are more culpable, especially where they (wilfully, it seems to me) distort my own arguments and position, either as stated here or in other publications. Other statements, moreover, are not just misleading, but misled.

One example of numbers juggling is Emmer's deployment of the statistics for evictions in Jamaica in the post-emancipation period. For him, "the eviction of 45 squatters a year during the period 1869-1900 is extremely low in relation to an ex-slave population of more than 300,000" (p. 280), whereas for me (and, presumably, Veront Satchell, who compiled the statistics) the same data can be shown to mean the eviction of 1,200 *families* from about 28,000 acres within a decade by the government alone, apart from private evictions (Craton 1994:57). Along the same lines are Emmer's conclusions that the incidence of unrest both during and after slavery are evidence of relative quiescence and satisfaction among the laborers rather than the reverse. This is backed up, moreover, by a statement about the paucity of the forces of law and order needed both before and after emancipation that is demonstrably false. In *Testing the Chains* (1982) I have surely demonstrated how vital it was to have garrison troops and militia to keep the peace and put down slave revolts during slavery, and how slave revolts occurred most commonly in times of military weakness. Even after slavery ended, regular army detachments, especially units of the West Indies Regiment, were deployed in almost all colonies for much the

same purpose, until they were superseded by a sufficient constabulary.

The example of the Bahamas, one of the poorest colonies, gives the lie to Emmer's assertion that a strong police force was deemed unnecessary and did not increase after slavery ended (p. 280). As an excellent analysis by Howard Johnson (1991:110-24) and the forthcoming second volume of the social history of the Bahamas by Gail Saunders and myself show, there was a steady increase in the numbers and efficiency of the Bahamian Police after 1833 (augmented from 18 to 140 in sixty years, or eight times over, while the overall population scarcely doubled), with the major reorganization (and quasi-militarization of the force) occurring as a direct result of the withdrawal of the garrison in 1891.

Even shakier are Emmer's relativistic argument (p. 288) that the fate of the West Indian ex-slaves was tolerable because conditions for workers in Europe were little if any better, and his implication that I ignore parallels and linkages between metropolitan and colonial conditions. Apart from the blunt rejoinder that neither of two evils is good, I would like to restate the bases of my long-held beliefs: that the so-called liberal reforms initiated in the metropole were made under pressure and represented adjustments by the ruling class to retain wealth and power (in a manner most famously analyzed by Antonio Gramsci); that while the imperial adoption of free trade and laissez-faire policies doomed the British West Indies to become an economic backwater, similar hegemonic adjustments were made by the colonial planter and agro-commercial elites in an altogether more blatant form, through their dominance in the legislatures and executives, and their control of the forces of law and order, of the system of education and, above all, of the laws relating to landholding and relations between employers and employed.

All elements in the British West Indies may have suffered as the century went on and economic conditions deteriorated further, but what power and wealth there was to be garnered was monopolized by the bourgeoisie (planters, landowners, merchants), while the majority of the population (peasants, proletarians, peasant-proletarians, indentured immigrants) were relatively victimized. I challenge Emmer to show that the ordinary people of the West Indies were not in fact oppressed, did not suffer worse physical and material conditions than any found in Britain, and were not intentionally retarded in respect of social services, political representation, landholding, employer-employee relations and trade union legislation, after an impartial reading of the evidence (even the conclusions) of the official inquiries, for example, into the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica, the Federation Riots in Barbados, the various plantation explosions in British

Guiana, and into British West Indian conditions in general made in 1897-98 and 1938-45.

Judging by his remarks on my treatment of slave demography, however, it seems unlikely that Emmer could ever review evidence impartially or treat a counter interpretation fairly. His assertion that I seem "to assume that the planters could throw the switch from negative to positive demographic growth by simply reducing the workload" and thus to attribute to planters an "omnipotence" which reaches "supernatural dimensions" (p. 280) is a gross distortion. Even a cursory reading of what I have previously written on slave demography (such as two articles not cited by Emmer, published in the *William and Mary Quarterly* in 1978 and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* in 1979) shows that the intensity of work exacted was but one of the determinants of population growth in slave populations which I recognize; while a fairer reading of the present article shows that what I refer to was simply the tactic of slave owners (like those in the Bahamas and the Virgin Islands) who had slaves surplus to local labor needs (and who had increased in numbers mainly because they were not crammed into slave quarters and forced into plantation labor in less healthy areas) did their utmost to transfer them to colonies (like Jamaica and Trinidad) where the owners could obtain a better financial return from the slaves' labor (invariably to the slaves' demographic detriment).

That Emmer's remarks about my position in regard to the technological options open to planters over the transitional period (p. 282) is a similar distortion can be adjudged in reference to the relevant sections of *Searching for the Invisible Man* (1978) and my summary remarks in a symposium on the subject organized by Peter Boomgaard and Gert Oostindie, entitled "Searching for a Unified Field Theory," published in this journal in 1989.

The most extreme of Emmer's imputations is that my sympathies for the hitherto mute masses of the West Indian underclass hobble my objectivity. This is accompanied by remarks such as "it is not clear whether he would have preferred a development in which the plantations had disappeared overnight," and "had Michael Craton as a freedman chosen Haiti in order to escape the arrogance of the planters, the strikes and rebellions, the lack of social services, the absence of a general franchise and the difficulty of obtaining sufficient land, he would have been migrating from the frying pan into the fire" (p. 285). My response to this is that as an historian my own hypothetical preferences are irrelevant to my responsibility objectively to analyze what actually happened. Whether I do this or not, and whether my conception of objective analysis is sounder than Emmer's, are, of course, far less important than whether my account of the transition out

of slavery in the British West Indies is more solidly rooted in the scholarly evidence and more convincing than his. This, as well as the matter of relative authorial bias, is for the fair reader to judge.

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JEAN BESSON

CONSENSUS IN THE FAMILY LAND CONTROVERSY:  
REJOINDER TO MICHAELINE A. CRICHLLOW

In her contribution to *NWIG* 68 (1994:77-99), "An Alternative Approach to Family Land Tenure in the Anglophone Caribbean," Michaeline Crichlow posits an "institutional-structural" school comprising Edith Clarke, M.G. Smith and myself, supported by Yvonne Acosta and Jean Casimir, to which she sees Charles V. Carnegie, Lesley McKay and herself as counterposed. M.G. Smith (1965:221), citing Clarke, identifies "two highly distinct systems of land tenure ... found side by side in many British Caribbean societies," and uses these "institutional distinctions" to support his plural society thesis; "similarly Besson (1979), who is primarily interested in the origins of family land tenure and sees it as emanating out of conflicts between planters and peasants, commits a similar error of treating family land as an institution" (p. 79).

Michaeline Crichlow interprets my work as drawing primarily on George Beckford's thesis of plantation-peasant conflict, where peasant resistance entails a "confrontational relationship to planters and plantation production"; and as paralleling Clarke's argument "that there was a conflict between the peasant form of land tenure that was African and English law" (pp. 79-80, 94 n3). This "rigid" approach "flouts the historical process," sees the plantation "as the source of original sin eliciting passive responses from those it attempts to dominate," treats the peasantry as "an undifferentiated mass," and is "unilluminating and uninteresting" (pp. 80-81, 88-89, 93). It provides a pretext for "the most potent attack against family land," namely, underproduction (p. 84); "Besson ... faults the system's inefficiency in the use of 'unrestricted cognatic descent'" (p. 96 n17). Crichlow also claims that the family land literature overlooks "the question of ownership and access to land by poor people and women" (p. 95 n12).



On the basis of a five-month study in Choiseul, St. Lucia, where "smallholders ... speak French Creole (patois) more easily than English" (p. 83), Crichlow sets forth her view, joining "those who call for restoring family land tenure to its rightful place alongside other recognized forms of tenure" (p. 78). She begins her analysis "in the immediate post-emancipation era, since this is the period from which institutionalists find evidence for their arguments of resistance and antagonism to plantation production" (p. 80). She argues that after emancipation smallholders exhibited both resistance and accommodation to the plantation system, "primarily through the control of land under various forms of tenure, including family land, free hold land, land under common tenantry, or metayage," citing Sidney Mintz (1989:155) to the effect that "[t]he formation of a Caribbean 'peasantry' was at once an act of resistance and an act of westernization" (pp. 80-81). She claims her "exploratory findings scratch the surface of the workings of family land tenure in other Caribbean islands," and reveal "the need for more rigorous research ... based on case studies, life histories, and in depth interviews in order to further isolate and link family land tenure with the rest of the agricultural sector" (p. 94).

I briefly respond to these views and then suggest that Crichlow's "preliminary" findings (p. 93) support my own. By setting polemic aside, we may consolidate our understanding of the complex relation of Caribbean peasantries to land. My analyses of Caribbean peasant land tenure – in the three articles (Besson 1979, 1984, 1987) drawn on by Crichlow and in many other places – are based on rigorous research during the period 1968-94, both in Jamaica and in the Eastern Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> I have both isolated family land tenure and linked it with the rest of the agricultural sector. For example, I identified multiple legal and customary tenures in Martha Brae, a Jamaican village encompassed by plantations, before isolating family land for further analysis. I related the "mosaic of land tenures resulting from land scarcity," and elaborated by provision ground tenures including squatting and "free land" on plantations, to the internal differentiation of the peasantry (Besson 1984:58; 1988:42).

I have not been primarily interested in the origins of family land, but in a range of areas: origins and persistence, regional distribution, internal structure and dynamics (including gender relations), articulation with the legal system and with common tenure, and implications for hidden history and sustainable development. Regarding origins and persistence, I have questioned (not supported) Clarke's Africanist/Ashanti thesis, arguing that family land is not a cultural survival from Africa or Europe, but represents culture-building by Caribbean peasants in response and resistance to the plantation system and other land monopoly such as by mining and

tourism. Family land also reflects the positive values of the peasantries. My historical perspective extends beyond the post-emancipation period to slavery, when slaves of both genders created customary tenurial systems in proto-peasant adaptations. I have identified a range of strategies by ex-slaves for obtaining land, including purchase, rental, squatting, and remaining on plantations. Family land evolved within this wider context and its unrestricted cognatic system – incorporating women and men, and female and male descendants, including non-residents – differs from African unilineal transmission (e.g. Ashanti matrilineal landholding), which functions with extensive land. Caribbean cognatic systems, forged in land scarcity to maximize freehold rights and family lines among descendants of chattel slaves, are similar to Pacific island cognatic tenures – though family land may be reinforced by African cognitive orientations. But only in the interiors of Suriname and French Guiana has there been enough land and relative autonomy to forge African-type matrilineal systems.

I have drawn on Beckford's plantation economy thesis but gone beyond it. Beckford (1972:76) focused on the persistent poverty generated by plantations, and argued that the plantation system resulted in "weak" families and communities. My anthropological findings, by contrast, have shown the strength of Caribbean villages and landholding kin groups created in response and resistance to land monopoly. This conclusion has advanced Mintz's thesis (1989:132-33) that "Caribbean peasantries represent a *mode of response* to the plantation system and its connotations, and a *mode of resistance* to imposed styles of life." My concept of "resistance" is taken from Mintz and is more complex than confrontation; for "some of the most effective forms of *resistance* were built upon prior *adaptation*" (Mintz 1989:76).

My usage of "institution," to refer to the family land systems created by slaves and their descendants through this process of creolization, is drawn not from M.G. Smith, but from Mintz and Price (1992:19), who observe that "the organizational task of enslaved Africans in the New World was that of creating institutions – institutions that would prove responsive to the needs of everyday life under the limiting conditions that slavery imposed upon them." They specifically subsume normative and recurrent relationships under these institutions.

Despite my own earlier critique of Clarke and M.G. Smith, Carnegie (1987) mistakenly assumed that my use of "institution" supported M.G. Smith's plural society thesis, with its idiosyncratic "institutional analysis." Thus Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1989:324), in his review of the Carnegie-Besson exchange, sums up: "the problem is in part terminological: what constitutes an institution?" Here, he says, "the distinction between the

'social' and the 'cultural', which Besson picks up from Mintz, represents an advance in the discussion." Such distinctions between structure and action provided the basis of my "intersystem" analysis of the articulation of family land with the Jamaican legal code, and of my own critique of M.G. Smith's plural society thesis and Clarke's conflict-only approach – well before Carnegie's and twenty years before Crichlow. I analyzed five variants of social/social organizational interaction between the cultural/social structural systems of family land and the Jamaican legal code: the imposition by the state of legal elements on family land; "crab antics" or the selection, by individuals, of aspects of the legal code to challenge the family land system; individual selection of legal elements to reinforce, adjust or create family land; the indirect reinforcement of family land by aspects of the legal code; and the transformation of areas of the law by customary family-land principles. Lesley McKay (1987) pursued this approach, while Crichlow's focus on land titling and registration parallels my first variant. Here Trouillot (1989:324-25) was right in arguing that both Carnegie and I "are, in fact, trying to perfect what I would call a 'historical-processual' model ... along the lines established by Mintz"; "the only issue on which Carnegie and Besson really differ, in my view, is that of African retentions; my own position on this is closer to that of Besson."

While acknowledging the "uneconomic" aspects of family land tenure from a capitalist perspective (reinforcing the analysis of unrestricted cognation), I have defended family land systems as adaptive modes of tenure, land use and transmission, "rather than anachronistic cultural remnants inhibiting agricultural progress" (Besson 1984:73); I have argued that land monopoly constrains agricultural development. I have shown that voluntary non-use by absentee co-heirs may enable intensive cultivation; that common tenures provide further evidence of adaptation and resistance; and that tenures rooted in kinship and community are bases of sustainable development and repositories of hidden history.

Several scholars have found these perspectives useful (e.g. Mintz 1989: xxvii), and Crichlow's substantive preliminary findings tend to corroborate them. Thus she states that family land is not "an anachronism" (p. 77). Her study underlines the significance of family land, which "may or may not exist alongside other tenure types" (p. 77); in Choiseul "76 percent of land owners held family land" and "[m]ost people ... had no other land but family land" (pp. 82-83). Furthermore, "70 percent of our respondents feel that (all things being equal) family land should remain as is"; that is, regard it as inalienable (Crichlow p. 91). Like Carnegie and like myself, Crichlow uses the family land concept in what is clearly an institutional sense. She provides evidence of the relation

between family land and other small-scale tenures, and with the legal code; though her statement that "[c]ustomary land tenure, more familiarly known as family land" overlooks other customary tenures such as common land and squatting, and her assertion that family land is not "non-legal" begs the question of her definition of "customary land tenure" (p. 77).

Crichlow also highlights the role of family land in the context of land scarcity: "[w]ithout the existence of family land, a large number of poor people, particularly women, would not have had access to land," thus "the possession of family land saved them from a state of landlessness" (p. 83). She notes the importance of landholding families and their inclusion of women (pp. 83, 87, 93-94); and identifies the variants of residence/absenteeism/voluntary non-use and amity/conflict, the overlapping claims, and the right of migrants to return (pp. 90-93) that typify unrestricted landholding corporations. She rightly concludes that family land is not an obstacle to development, despite the tendencies towards voluntary non-use and underproduction, as seen from a capitalist perspective, deriving from unrestricted cognation; and she shows that family land may sometimes be intensively cultivated (pp. 84, 90-93). She also identifies the link between family-land holders and French Creole-speakers in St. Lucia (p. 83), reinforcing Acosta and Casimir's (1985:35, 39) analysis of family land and French Creole as parallel aspects of a St. Lucian "counter-plantation system" rather than "the very source of backwardness". In sum, therefore, and in spite of her criticism of my work, Crichlow's findings mainly support my own conclusions.

#### NOTE

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REPLY TO JEAN BESSON

It is very difficult to operate within the plantation economy paradigm (Best 1968; Beckford 1972; Girvan 1973), and treat history as subject to change. This was the substance of my critique in my article in *NWIG* 68 (pp. 77-99). Its empirical subject matter dealing with the lived experiences of smallholders (popularly designated Caribbean folk) demonstrated the limitations of the plantation paradigm in exploring the rich lives of Caribbean working peoples. I am one of several analysts who has made my discomfort with the paradigm clear and so there have been numerous critiques (Bernstein & Pitt 1974; Sudama 1979). I will cite only the most salient given the nature of this exercise. The first is that the paradigm reifies the plantation as the critical "institution" to which folk can act and react to in the Caribbean societies. It makes light of the major changes (called revolutionary by for example Philip Curtin 1955) that transpired in the post-emancipation period. For example, it fails to deal with the destruction of a colonial relation economically secured by plantation production as pertaining to a single historical phase, so relationships specific to the colonial period prevail unchanged in the post-colonial era. The paradigm does not see the West Indies as part of a world system of capitalism which overarching reach occasion adaptive and resistant responses on the part of working peoples.<sup>1</sup> To put it more concretely, the paradigm makes mention of, but does not integrate and center the demise of the colonial relations globally and the rising hegemonic rivalry among the industrializing states in North Western Europe and not least the rise of the United States as a critical explanatory link to the collapse of the plantation regime. The plantation system collapsed, but for these theorists the plantation looms large

everywhere. Like its parent the old dependency school, it speaks of the multinational national corporation as a new form of plantation endorsing the perspective that small banana producers (for example) were locked into similar relationships with United Fruit Company in much the same way as plantation laborers and smallholders had been with plantations during the pure plantation or the post-plantation era. This gets us nowhere intellectually and poses dire political consequences as well. Furthermore, the imputed homogeneity of such relationships between and among various capitals and labor is unacceptable. It is a historical paradigm as several scholars before me have pointed out. Thus an analysis of family land tenure framed within the context of the plantation paradigm might not discover insightful mechanisms by which Caribbean working peoples sought to conceptualize and live their "citizenness." If that cultural form is in a state of reconstitution, constitution dissolution, given the non-existence of a plantation economy, I argued we might want to simply transcend the plantation paradigm, and reframe even the whole notion of resistance, or be more precise about it.

The complexity of Caribbean life necessitates not a rehabilitation of the plantation economy thesis as others in acknowledging the very insightful (but now dated) work of Beckford seek to do<sup>2</sup> but a redefinition of social and economic space and a reappraisal of plantation hegemony in the lives of Caribbean working peoples. That would not detract from the Beckford legacy but strengthen and enrich it. The late George L. Beckford was concerned about the "small man" as he used to put it (in pre-politically correct times). Therefore any work which attempts to expose the charade of party politics in the region, middle-class and ruling class subterfuge, the subterranean culture of the past and present, the efforts by progressive working peoples to chart new alternative forms of participatory democracy etc. not least proposing new ways for working peoples to engage capital, will be honoring the memory of a sensitive, brilliant, witty, political Caribbean man. One can do that (might I say presumptuously one ought to) without necessarily working within the plantation economy framework.<sup>3</sup>

My article on family land (a preliminary work that is part of a larger and longer term project concerned with excavating culture in the region), seeks to alert Caribbeanists to the need to revise some of their insightful interpretations of Caribbean life so skewed in the direction of cultural pluralism (without necessarily stating so) yet so weighted toward uncovering strategies of resistance that we lose sight of the textured and complex process of how a psychological and material sense of "citizenness" was and is being constructed throughout the region. More specifically, we still

need to uncover how the colonial and post-colonial state attempted to shape the life practices of citizenry and how the latter responded then and now and with what effect on such formal policy. I admit these points remain shadowed in my article. I do agree that efforts in this direction have been undertaken by senior scholars such as Besson. I am indeed honored that she finds much complementarity between my ideas and hers.

### NOTES

1. For a very eloquent presentation of this perspective see Dale Tomich (1990). See especially the introductory chapter where he outlines his theoretical framework.
2. A more recent rendition of a neo-plantation approach can be found in the work of Witter 1992 and Stolberg 1992.
3. Besson (1995) in her strong critique of Espeut's article in Stolberg & Wilmot's (1992) volume honoring the work of Beckford admits to adopting this framework. See especially p. 114 where this allegiance is recounted. My article that she critiques on family land tenure points out the pitfalls of this approach.

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## CONSTRUCTING TROPICAL MODERNITY

*Antonin Nechodoma, Architect, 1877-1928: The Prairie School in the Caribbean.* THOMAS S. MARVEL. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994. xx + 223 pp. (Cloth US\$ 44.95)

*Puerto Rico 1900: Turn-of-the-Century Architecture in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1890-1930.* JORGE RIGAU. New York: Rizzoli, 1992. 232 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00)

The buildings and ruins we discover for ourselves hold a lasting place in our imagination, not to say in our affections. In a society that has neglected the formal treatment of "space," architecturally as well as in political terms, these personal discoveries can promote a subversion of sorts. Thus, the consecutive appearance of two volumes addressing the architecture produced at the turn of the century in Puerto Rico is a notable event. Each results from an architect's passionate concern with the advent of modernity. Thomas Marvel's book concentrates on the life and work of Antonin Nechodoma, an American of Bohemian origin who spent his most productive years in Puerto Rico. It is the result of his decades-long fascination with a "versatile architect, designer, and craftsman working in unusual circumstances" (p. xviii) who left, both in Puerto Rico and in the Dominican Republic, a string of edifices strangely echoing the continental Prairie School. It is an effort to resolve the author's ambivalent attitude towards this enigmatic creator, and to unravel his production at the moment of Puerto Rico's advent to full-blown capitalism. The Rigau book attempts a wider interpretation of the period, focusing on nineteenth-century influences and the architects who left their mark in the cities of Ponce, San Germán, and Mayagüez. Even though it was published two

years earlier, it is almost a conversation – if not an overt dispute – with Marvel on the vicissitudes of *modernismo* in the new island possession. Although Jorge Rigau does not eulogize the period, his emblematic emphasis on Alfredo B. Wiechers makes the book a very close attempt at lamenting the “long lost happiness” of those days. In addition to the biographical sketch of an architect, he provides a wider portrait of the dominant elite during the same period.

Both authors, like the personalities they deal with, are architects. The lives of Nechodoma and Wiechers never touched, though their projects were erected in Puerto Rico during the same decade (1908-18). Each represented a particular style of innovation: Wiechers stood for the Beaux Arts tradition acquired in his European training, while Nechodoma focused on exploring and adapting new materials more suited to the climate. Nechodoma worked on the island from 1905 to 1927, leaving his work throughout the territory (Ponce, Aibonito, San Juan, Guayama, Coamo, Fajardo, Vieques, Humacao, Mayagüez, and elsewhere), while Wiechers's output was concentrated in Ponce, largely between 1911 and 1918. (Wiechers ventured outside Ponce only to design two structures for prominent families of Catalanian origin in Adjuntas and Aibonito.) Both men engaged in a variety of projects; Wiechers designed hotels, stores, *casas de vecindad*, mausoleums and factories, in addition to houses for prominent citizens, and Nechodoma produced schools, churches, banks and telegraph offices, in addition to bungalows and mansions. In spite of these similarities, sharp differences in background marked these men in distinct ways. A self-made man beginning as a master builder in Chicago, Nechodoma was a secure and able constructor committed to the newer trends, while Wiechers – the son of a Hamburg businessman turned vice consul during the last decades of the nineteenth century and a Puerto Rican of Corsican decent – was brought up in seignorial Ponce and was later a student at L'Ecole Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris. Both had traveled and were familiar with the changes taking place at the turn of the century. Nechodoma spent time in Jacksonville, Florida, and in the Dominican Republic. Wiechers lived in Barcelona (ca. 1904-10), where he worked for the renowned architect Enric Sagnier i Villavecchia. Modern men they were, although the ways in which each one solved spatial problems were distinctive. This may say something about the often assumed homogeneity of modernity, particularly in the Caribbean.

*Puerto Rico 1900* is an elegant publication, profusely illustrated with drawings, designs, photographs – some in exuberant color – and prints. It contains a preface by Leon Krier. An introduction aptly states its goals, pointing to the long-range project of comparing the architecture of the

Hispanic Caribbean. (Rigau co-authored a 1994 book on Havana.) It also explains the chronological limits of the investigation (1890-1930) and suggests further studies like the rural-urban interchange in architecture, the impact of new building materials, and changes in the views of space and spatial sequence. The first of five chapters deals with the new urban realm; subtitled "Codes as Precedent for Cityscape Transformations," it traces the incorporation of planning and building concepts into prevailing codes and regulations which ultimately shaped the urban profile. The second chapter, "On Being Modern in the Caribbean," attempts to establish a relationship between literary *modernismo* and architecture. The next chapter dwells on architects and builders of the period, with special attention to the Ponce group (Bertoli, Silva Boucher, Porrata Doria, Conesa, Domenech, and particularly A.B. Wiechers). It is this salient chapter that makes one speculate on the author's desire to write a biography of Wiechers. The last two chapters, "Housing, Houses, and Schoolhouses" and "Spanish Revival as Spanish Denial," constitute a reflection on the wider scene from the perspective of architectural productions. The notes are rigorous and abundant, credit is provided for collaborators, and funding sources are dutifully mentioned. A list of surviving modernist houses is most useful for the *aficionado* as well as the scholar. A bibliography is carefully selected for the student of things social and spatial.

It seems unlikely that Rigau's plan was to inform the reader on the plurality of expressions which characterize *modernismo* in literature as well as in architecture, or that he wanted to mark the difference between this expression of *modernismo* and the extremes of international style and the trap of walking the tightrope of historicism and change. The first three chapters let us see only in an oblique fashion the momentous transformations at the economic and social level occurring during that period in the Caribbean. Thus, one begins to be unfavorably disposed toward his aesthetic musings. Trying to expound on what this meant for Latin America, Rigau often forgets the far more important and overwhelming determinants of these processes. He does not, for example, present colonialism as an important factor which would help understand the changes and vicissitudes of being modern in the Caribbean. These first chapters seem far too poetic for an overarching interpretation of things fundamentally social. His attempts at establishing parallels between the concerns of the literati and the chores of the designer are unsuccessful. The similarity between modernity and *modernismo* is more than a simple matter of semantics, even from a literary point of view. His last two chapters are far more adequate in dealing with the social and economic conditions that permitted urban and architectural developments. They also widen our view of these develop-

ments by signaling the pleiade of builders and designers working within an emerging social imaginary in a world built for others that simultaneously aspired to please the new masters and the old traditions. Thus, the ambivalent response of built structures themselves; dissimulating and pleasing, deferential and hostile vis-à-vis the profound changes in the social fabric. We are thus able to penetrate the aspirations of the elites and their followers in the notions they held on the city and the house.

*Antonin Nechodoma* deals with the man and his work, beginning with his Chicago years (1887-1905). This is followed by a chapter entitled "In Transition, 1905-1907," on his years in Jacksonville. "Residence in the Dominican Republic, 1908-1912" explores Nechodoma's sudden move to this country where he engaged mostly in U.S. supported public works. The next three chapters deal with Nechodoma's projects in Puerto Rico, and the final chapter addresses "The Dilemma of Nechodoma." Two appendixes provide lists of the buildings, giving the location and status of each one, and his published projects from 1908 to 1927. The volume has a foreword by H. Allen Brooks, a preface, acknowledgments, meticulous notes, a panoramic bibliography, and an index. It is also profusely illustrated with high quality photographs and drawings.

Marvel is rigorous in documenting Nechodoma's projects. Besides listing them, he is able to place them in context; that is, in the midst of the events that were shaping the societies where he worked. He also provides abundant evidence of Nechodoma's multifaceted personality (his role as contractor, engineer, materials innovator, architect, public official during the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic, preservationist, and even demolition consultant). The evidence of this builder's adaptation of the Prairie School to the tropical climate is impressive, particularly in his use of materials (cement, Compo Stone blocks, wood, glass, tile), the extension of roofs, concerns with providing ventilation, raising heights, placing porches or verandas in prominent places, and (as an amateur botanist) integrating landscaping and gardens. A concern for detail is not Marvel's only virtue; he is equally able to establish links between the creator's individual destiny and pivotal geopolitical events. Nevertheless, he wavers in his treatment of Nechodoma's copying of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs. He is ambivalent, neither reproaching nor condoning, but also not explaining Nechodoma's use of the Wasmuth Folio in several of his Puerto Rican projects. A more direct approach might have saved much pain. It seems that his actions were a common practice at the time. Authorship was not the crucial professional criterion it is at present. Marvel takes a less direct approach, one that neither exonerates nor fully elucidates. Nechodoma's use of the Wasmuth Folio, as well as his outright copying of several other

projects (like the All Saints by the Sea Episcopal Church of California, which was recreated in Ponce), was probably sought by Frank Lloyd Wright as is evidenced in Enrique Vivoni's essay (1989). Marvel is also extremely surprised that a man with no formal training as an architect was able to execute such sophisticated solutions as the Masonic Temple he created in Puerta de Tierra. "That he could do this so adroitly while also exploring a new residential style for Puerto Rico was remarkable. Even more impressive was his versatility in the light of scanty preparation for architecture, if he had any at all. This building showed that he could do a serious work with a sense of humor, a sophistication that is seldom seen in designs from a self-made man" (p. 89). Marvel neglects to consider the exposure Nechodoma had prior to the moment in which he was requested to take on these projects. Besides, one must not forget that he was a master-builder and possessed impeccable familiarity with the materials (Compo Stone blocks and cement). Professional credentialing, as currently required by law, may be necessary but not sufficient for exercising the imagination within a canon.

Periodically, both the general public and the professional must raise crucial questions regarding the architecture produced in a given social setting stimulated by the buildings we have discovered on our own. Is it adequate? How does it continue or break with the past productions? How will it affect the future? What social aspirations does it represent? Why have the buildings marked our vision of space as well as our tastes? Both books address these questions and promote much needed comparisons within the region.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Derek Walcott*. ROBERT D. HAMNER. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993. xvi + 199 pp. (Cloth US\$ 22.95)

*Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. ROBERT D. HAMNER (ed.). Washington DC: Three Continents, 1993. xvii + 482 pp. (Paper US\$ 20.00)

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Derek Walcott's achievement as a poet and dramatist is so large that it re-defines the map of contemporary literature. Long before he received the ultimate accolade of the Nobel Prize for Literature, his work demanded recognition beyond the confines of what was conventionally understood as West Indian or Caribbean literature. As long ago as 1973, when William Walsh's *Commonwealth Literature* offered the first substantial account of writing in English outside the British and American mainstream, the section on West Indian literature highlighted four contemporary poets – Hendriks was described as "the private, Brathwaite the public, Morris the young poet, and Walcott is just the poet." Exactly so. Walcott continues to escape easy labeling, crossing boundaries with the freedom that only a writer so gifted, ambitious, and varied could manage.

This much is amply demonstrated by Robert Hamner's two useful books. The first is a substantially revised version of his study of Walcott for Twayne published in 1981 (the first book-length account). Five solid chapters trace Walcott's thematic and aesthetic development from his "Apprenticeship Years: 1948-58" to what Hamner calls the "American

Muse: 1981-1992", that is, up to the production of *Omeros* (1990) and the receipt of the Nobel Prize. These chapters are framed by a very introductory – indeed, simplistic – opening chapter contextualizing Walcott, and a concluding piece on the often-neglected discursive prose essays and articles. Maintaining a balance between Walcott's dramatic and poetic sides is not easy, since the latter so obviously outreaches the former, for all that he was instrumental in establishing theater in English in the Caribbean. But Hamner's careful, if mainly descriptive, chronological approach ensures that no venture of Walcott's escapes due attention.

If there seems indeed to be little that escapes Hamner's comprehensive eye, which also covers an impressive range of brief but pointed extracts from Walcott's critical reception, it may seem churlish to say that nevertheless his book is generally rather humdrum and predictable. Thus *The Castaway* evinces: "sustained coherence"; *Sea Grapes* "functions more successfully as an artistic whole" than *O Babylon!* of the same year; *The Star-Apple Kingdom* "is filled with the type of men who respond imaginatively to their environments"; *The Fortunate Traveller* is permeated by "the continuing saga of an imaginative traveler"; *Another Life* gets points for being "fully mature"; while, rather surprisingly, *Omeros* is not just a "new kind of epic," but "one that invites its own deconstruction" – quite how is left unsaid. The effect of all this is to inform, rather than excite, flattening out the impact of the great poems, like "The Schooner *Flight*" (perhaps Walcott's masterpiece), while allowing others, including parts of *Another Life*, to escape legitimate questioning – for their portentousness, and occasional overweening male chauvinism (the other side of the heroic coin).

One critic who has taken Walcott to task for the "macho attitudes" she finds in *Another Life* and elsewhere, Elaine Savory Fido, receives no mention in either of Hamner's books, although one might at least have expected hers to have been one of the "critical perspectives" provided in that volume. But this is in line with the laudatory tone of most of the contributions, wide-ranging though they are. Hamner has revised his labels for Walcott's career yet again, dividing the reception of Walcott's work into "The Divided Child" (1948-59), "The Estranging Sea" (1960-69), "Homage to Gregorias" (1970-79), and "A Simple Flame" (1980-90) – titles with a metaphoric resonance barely supported by his own introductory remarks, much less those of his contributors.

However, given the presence of over forty essays and reviews – from Frank Collymore's historic piece in praise of the nineteen-year-old Walcott's self-published *25 Poems*, through the growing sophistication and informed complexity of response by such heavyweights as Mervyn Mor-



ris, Gordon Rohlehr, and Edward Baugh (here represented by two substantial pieces), to the broader, international engagement of poets and critics like Seamus Heaney, Calvin Bedient, and Biodun Jeyifo – who can complain?

This book should be required reading for anyone with the remotest interest in Walcott for its collection of critical pieces alone. But Hamner has made its place on the enthusiast's shelf absolutely essential by adding ten entries by Walcott himself – including two important interviews (on the Theatre Workshop and on *Collected Poems*) and the previously unpublished "Figure of Crusoe." This last was originally presented as a talk at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, on October 27, 1965 – a detail helpfully provided on the opening page of the essay, unlike the other pieces, whose source and date have to be gleaned from the acknowledgments and/or the extensive annotated bibliography.

In this remarkable early expression of his views, Walcott proposed the image of the castaway hermit and the bonfire as an apt one for the West Indian poet, seeing in it a metaphor of "tradition and the colonial talent. More profound than this, however, is that it is the daily ritual action of the poet creating a new poem." It is a striking suggestion: the poet in the Caribbean as a visionary individual who needs the past, but only in order to transform it in the purifying fire of his present. In this respect, Walcott is so much more than the literary humanist Brathwaite disparagingly calls him (as Patricia Ismond points out in an insightful comparative essay). Referring to those familiar but equally jaded versions of the Caribbean past produced by George Lamming and V.S. Naipaul, and their despair at the lack of culture, of civilization in the West Indies, Walcott exclaims "O happy desert!" For "we live not only on happy, but on fertile deserts, and we draw our strength, like Adam, like all hermits, all dedicated craftsmen, from that rich irony of our history."

Walcott's greatest strength, as many of his best critics here acknowledge, lies in this willingness to fill the void – although of course, as he says in "The Muse of History" (unfortunately not included in this collection), to perceive the past as a void should also be understood as no more nor less than another fiction, or myth, "subject to a fitful muse, memory," and producing "a literature of revenge, written by the descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the descendants of masters," whereas the "truly tough aesthetic of the New World neither explains nor forgives history." In this sense, the aesthetic which informs the *Collected Poems* and *Omeros* encompasses the past as any great modern poetry must, not by ignoring it, but by transforming it into a vision of the present.

*Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Negritude*. LILYAN KESTELOOT. Translated by Ellen Conroy Kennedy. Washington DC: Howard University Press, 1991. xxxiii + 411 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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This new edition of the 1974 English translation of *Les Ecrivains noirs de langue française* is a scrupulous piece of scholarship that will appeal both to new readers and to those who discovered the classic study of black protest and creativity when it was first published in 1963.

One fascinating thing about this monumental effort is the sense it creates of traveling through layers of time materialized by a juxtaposition of texts issued over three decades. The core and bulk of the volume is the English version of the Belgian critic's pioneering work which takes us from the early 1930s to the early 1960s. We pass from the origins to the aftermath of a vigorous cultural and literary movement initiated by colored and black French West Indian and West African students in the intellectual ferment of Paris, centered around Léopold Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire from Martinique, and Léon Gontran Damas from French Guiana – a rather familiar story now, impressive in itself. But with the translator's preface and richly documented introduction, and the author's 1989 and 1973 prefaces and 1963 introduction, readers are given an opportunity to confront a panel of critical views stretching across an era of rapid and drastic changes. It is not enough to commend the rendition of Lilyan Kesteloot's lucid prose or the brilliance of numerous pieces of poetry sampled in both their French and English versions. There is respect but also distance in the translator's fastidious attention, as she touches upon occasional overstatements and misreadings in her colleague's text.

This is no mere ("straight") translation, but the product of remarkable scholarly detective work which determined the "minor" yet illuminating editorial changes, like the re-arrangement and modification of chapter titles. Not least are the updated "Selected Bibliography" and, especially, the "Supplementary Bibliography, 1974-1990," listed as an indispensable tool for students of a fast developing field of research. One aspect of the new situation has been the growing interest in traditional literature and the use of the vernacular by African writers striving for authenticity: matters which were not unnoticed by Kesteloot, as is shown by her 1965 essay, "Problems of the Literary Critic," published in a remote Cameroonian

review and included here as a bonus. This visionary article will largely counterbalance the "certain number of inaccuracies and oversights" which she acknowledges and redresses in her preface to the first English-language edition of her book. These are occasional misjudgments and errors of perspective inherent in that sort of ground-breaking enterprise.

The only serious flaw in a literary history of such magnitude might well be the underestimation of the role of *La Revue du monde noir*, which anticipated by two years the revolution sparked by *Légitime défense* (1932), ignited by *L'Etudiant noir* (1934) and *Tropiques* (1941-44), and propagated by the still active *Présence Africaine* (1947). Kesteloot admits, in a footnote, that it was impossible for her "to obtain more information concerning this review published by Mademoiselle Nardal, or to obtain any copies of it" (p. 57). This probably accounts for the confusion in another footnote which mentions "the Achille brothers" (sic – they were actually father and son) as contributors to "this essentially cultural little magazine" (p. 9). Today such details are clearer, due to the recent re-edition of the bilingual review (1992) with a preface by Louis-Thomas Achille, who died in 1994 in France. One year before, Aimé Césaire's eightieth birthday had been celebrated in Fort-de-France in the midst of a controversy over the relevance of Negritude in the closing years of this century. Two books on Césaire by Martiniquan intellectuals were published the same year (Confiant 1993; Toumson & Henry-Valmore 1993). The first full biography of the author of the classic *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* was somewhat undermined by the first (radical) criticism of the "contradictions" of the small French island's leading poet and politician. Promoted by a vocal group of younger writers, the *créolité* movement stands today as a powerful alternative to the Great Old Man's credo.

Negritude is having a hard time. Faced by the difficulties of post-colonial Africa and the bitter disillusionment of new generations of African writers, Kesteloot confessed her "naïve optimism" as early as 1973 (p. 4). Ellen Conroy Kennedy does not seem to be affected by such reservations. Shedding the "ethno-mysticism" attached to the concept, she reaffirms the authority of the word in the very title of her translation. She might be right, after all. From its inception, the movement had been rife with debates, which are honestly chronicled in the original work. It has overcome them all, and the intended American audience will provide it with fresh arguments. Significantly, this edition appears at a time when the "new black ethnic awareness" that took root in the United States in the 1960s (p. xxii) is feeding theories of Afro-centricity. And it comes from the prestigious place of black intellectual activity, Howard University, where the late Professor Achille taught, and found the base of his culture.

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*Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*. CAROLE BOYCE DAVIES & ELAINE SAVORY FIDO (eds.). Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 1990. xxiii + 399 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 15.95)

*Woman Version: Theoretical Approaches to West Indian Fiction by Women*. EVELYN O'CALLAGHAN. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1993. viii + 126 pp. (Paper £ 13.95)

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In recent years Caribbean women writers have been published in unprecedented numbers. Invitations to read and talk about their work have come from around the world along with prestigious literary prizes. Another response to this virtual explosion has been the considerable attention of scholars. Literature conferences routinely feature papers on Caribbean women writers, and there even exists a conference devoted especially to their work, the International Conference on Caribbean Women Writers. Critical studies in the form of essays in academic journals and in special issues abound. Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido's *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature* is the first major collection of essays on this topic and thus establishes a precedent. *Woman Version: Theoretical Approaches to West Indian Fiction by Women* by Evelyn O'Callaghan follows in its footsteps.

Since its publication in 1990, *Out of the Kumbla* has proven to be enormously influential. The frequently cited introduction, written by the editors, presents an overview of prose fiction, theater, poetry, and criticism, but more important, explores the reasons for the Caribbean woman

writer's voicelessness and absence – that is, the construction of woman as silent, and the absence of her text and voice on subjects such as colonialism and slavery. The collection also contains a foreword by Pamela Claire Mordecai, a preface in the form of a dialogue between Davies and Fido, an afterword by Sylvia Wynter, and a selected bibliography.

The essays in Part One, entitled "Woman Consciousness: Righting History and Redefining Identity in Caribbean Literature," explore broad themes and issues such as history, identity, migration, and dislocation. Part Two, "Constricting and Expanding Spaces: Women in Caribbean Literature," considers representations of women by male writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Wilson Harris, Roy A.K. Heath, and George Lamming, as well as representation of women in orature, specifically in proverbs, tales, and calypso. Part Three, "Caribbean Women Writers: Redefining Caribbean Literature," focuses on individual writers: an interview with Nancy Morejón and articles on Simone Schwarz-Bart, Maryse Condé, Jamaica Kincaid, Sylvia Wynter, and Erna Brodber. The authors of these essays, leading literary critics who happen to be Caribbeanists as well – Betty Wilson, Abena Busia, Sylvia Wynter, Vèvè A. Clark, Carolyn Cooper, Rhonda Cobham, and Lemuel Johnson, to name a few – provide stimulating information through their readings and analyses.

*Out of the Kumbla* must be commended for its inclusiveness. Not only does it transgress the language barriers imposed by colonialism, it considers well-known and little-known women writers from Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, and Trinidad along with those residing outside the region. One shortcoming, however, is its omission of some very important voices. Haitian women writers receive no mention at all, except for Marie Vieux Chauvet who appears in one paragraph. She indeed deserves, at least, an essay devoted to her *oeuvre*. Cuba is also slighted, represented only by an interview with Nancy Morejón. Neither are any writers from the Dutch-speaking Caribbean included. Nevertheless, *Out of the Kumbla* sets the standard for future collections.

Also foregrounding the female experience is O'Callaghan's *Woman Version: Theoretical Approaches to West Indian Fiction by Women*, which complements *Out of the Kumbla*. Moreover, it interrogates the applicability of theories traditionally used to read Western texts, suggesting instead guidelines for reading Caribbean women's literature. This study is by a single author, and therefore, does not attempt to cover as much ground as its predecessor, acknowledging a limit to fictional narratives. The "version" in the title is borrowed from a form of Jamaican music, a "remix, a dub version." O'Callaghan's music analogy brings to mind Henry Louis Gates's concept of signifyin'.

Recognizing the foundation laid by black and white women writers from the nineteenth century, Chapter 1 takes a look at their early work. Chapter 2 is a revision of the author's essay on madwomen as social metaphor in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *As the Sorcerer Said*, and Zee Edgell's *Beka Lamb* which appeared in *Out of the Kumbula*. This version benefits from material, some of it still unpublished, that was not available at the time of the original essay. Chapter 3 considers post-colonial theory and Caribbean women's writing, looking at how Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* informs Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*. Chapter 5 is a reading of texts that critique male patriarchal authority. In the final chapter, O'Callaghan calls for a plurality of approaches to reading narratives by Caribbean women.

Although it is short in length, *Woman Version* is indeed a significant contribution to the field, a welcome addition to the criticism on Caribbean women writers. Both *Woman Version* and *Out of the Kumbula* are crucial to our understanding of the literature of the region.

*Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture.* CAROLYN COOPER. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1993. ix + 214 pp. (Paper £ 13.95)

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This appealing and provocative collection of essays explores a rich and diverse body of Jamaican performance poetry, oral narrative, and popular song. Author Carolyn Cooper examines a variety of expressive forms, including the verse of dub poets and of Louise Bennett, the transcriptions of oral autobiographies in Sistren's *Lionheart Gal*, the novelization of legend in *The Harder They Come*, and the lyrics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century popular song and contemporary reggae and dancehall music. Cooper examines works of largely *oral* origin as *text* in order to explore the divide between "'long head' and 'book'" (p. 2), that is, between "oral and scribal discourse" and the parallel evaluative scale, both in Jamaica and abroad, that privileges foreign, "high," or "upper-case Culture" (p. 174) over local, "low" culture and its expressive forms.

Each of the essays, written separately over several years, fits easily into

a coherent analytic whole and contributes to Cooper's encompassing effort to claim the cultural center for Jamaican oral art. Cooper argues that the "vulgar" body of Jamaican popular culture has been debased and marginalized by a European literary canon that sometimes even refuses to recognize orality as "art." She notes that taking popular culture seriously is, for the literary critic, a political act, for "in neo-colonial societies such as ours, the very acknowledgement of certain distinctly Jamaican 'noises' as 'art' implies a transgressive ideological position that redefines the boundaries of the permissible, legitimizing vagrant texts that both restructure the canon and challenge the very notion of canonicity" (p. 15).

Cooper's own agile writing style complements her critical transgression and celebrates the popular arts she studies in language that is often its match. The author's word-play blends fluidly with her textual examples, and her reference to "orifices," "ejaculations," "penetrations" and other vivid images suggest how orality evokes the sexualized body, especially of women. Cooper argues that Jamaican popular texts are themselves a "feminized" discourse because they represent the devalued and "vulgar" voice – the "noises in the blood" – of the colonized "native" (p. 3). Like women in the dancehall who flaunt their sexuality and convert a form of subordination into a source of power and affirmation, these popular arts appropriate the master's pen (or microphone or turntable) for their own purposes.

Cooper points out how works that use Jamaican Creole rather than English are inherently transgressive of the canonical order because they invert the traditional hierarchy of cultural power. Jamaican is the everyday language of local popular audiences, but it is unintelligible and inaccessible to outsiders. Louise Bennett's poems and the dancehall DJ's lyrics can make schoolchildren out of audiences of the cultural "centers" who usually dictate the terms and values of the cultural canon. Cooper notes how the lyrics need to be translated "even for some Jamaicans" (p. 193), and she describes her own experience of listening seriously to dancehall music and finding that what was formerly indecipherable "noise" gradually became meaningful "art."

Inspired by the use of "Patwah" or Jamaican language in *Lionheart Gal*, the life testimonies of the Sistren collective's members, Cooper uses Jamaican in a four-page experiment of her own to suggest that serious criticism can take place in a language that is outside the "imperial authority of the English father-tongue" (p. 90). This experiment brings to the fore the book's theoretical vulnerability: Cooper's effort to subvert the canon is carried out in the canon's own terms. By employing an oppositional theoretical framework that juxtaposes father to mother tongue, male

to female, high to low culture, scribal to oral, canonical to popular, English to Jamaican language, European to African traditions, and "book" to "long head," Cooper offers an overly polarized depiction of what is a more complex and often contradictory relationship among meaningful symbolic elements that make up Jamaican cultural life.

Cooper's dichotomous analytic framework does not do justice to the keen cultural insights evident in her examples. She shows, for example, how the popular works she considers do not merely oppose the written word, but interact with and invoke it: Louise Bennett deftly employs her knowledge of "book" in her "dialect" performance poetry, and the dancehall DJs sample from the Bible, English nursery rhymes, and other written and oral sources of past and present. The popular arts Cooper discusses can be more fully appreciated by emphasizing how they incorporate aspects of the canon even as they challenge and subvert it.

The most important political effect of popular culture, however, is its independence from the canon and the way it makes meaning on its own terms. Recognizing both its artistic autonomy and its cultural integration into a local creole tradition requires studying not *texts* alone but the full *contexts* of popular performance. Those who undertake such studies, and all students of Caribbean cultures, will benefit from serious consideration of Cooper's pathbreaking collection.

*East Indian Women of Trinidad & Tobago: An Annotated Bibliography with Photographs and Ephemera.* KUMAR MAHABIR. San Juan, Trinidad: Chakra, 1992. vii + 346 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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I would agree completely with the assessment of Rhoda Reddock that "[t]his publication is a necessary contribution to the ongoing process of the documentation of the life experiences of Indian women in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the debates and discourses surrounding them." The book is intended to address imbalances in knowledge of ethnicity in Trinidad and Tobago generally, but particularly in the domain of knowledge about women. Mahabir argues that if Trinbagonian women in general are neglected by society, then Indo-Trinbagonian women are



virtually invisible, meaning that their presence and accomplishments go unacknowledged in the public record. In Mahabir's view, this is partly a function of the popular notion that all Caribbean women are "black." The fact that the bibliographic section comprises only one third of the book supports this view. Mahabir should be applauded for his painstaking search through newspapers, as well as a variety of print materials, and for classifying the materials into categories like role and status, employment, family and fertility, etc. – the end result being a useful reference book.

However, although the author admits himself that the annotations vary in length and quality, it is precisely for this reason that one may question the analytical depth of the annotations. For instance, the annotation of one article with which I am familiar, on sexual politics in the East Indian family, while descriptively accurate, lacks mention of its major thesis: that a crucial change took place in the power base of kinship, in both an economic and a ritual sense, not only in the transition from India to Trinidad, but with the passage of time in Trinidad. Such an oversight is not inconsequential. It makes one wonder about interpretations of other references and at the very least it could mislead the reader away from important findings and conclusions. There is also a disturbing tendency to allude, for example, to "the implications of these changes" and "some reasons for this problem" without specifying what these implications or reasons are.

Overall, two recurring themes emerge from the bibliography. One is an extreme ambivalence about East Indian women wishing to pursue independence and self-advancement, particularly through education and employment. Indeed, the section on education is very short and many news pieces deal with wife-beating and alcoholism as destructive responses by East Indian men, in their attempts to maintain control of their women. And some articles blatantly assert that Hindu women belong in the home unless they wish to end up in broken homes, divorced with delinquent children. Several essays are concerned with the "new sexual freedom" of East Indian women, expressed not only in the "intense gyrations" of Chutney dancing, but by East Indian female calypsonians who are characterized as "vulgar," "loose," and "slack." Other writers claim that the stereotype of the long suffering, docile, and submissive East Indian woman is far from the truth. The truth probably lies somewhere in between.

Another prominent theme is the miscommunication and strained relations between Africans and Indians (the two major "races" of Trinidad and Tobago), particularly on the subject of inter-racial unions. This can be seen in the complaints voiced by Indo-Trinidadians about Afro-Trinidadian calypsonians insulting East Indian women by incorrectly using Hindi epi-

thets such as "maharajin" and "nanee," the former meaning a woman of high religious status and the latter a dignified, venerated grandmother. My own reading is that insult is not intended, but clearly, calypsonians could be more sensitive and exercise more wisdom in their lyrics. More to the point, the singing about East Indian women by Afro-Trinidadian calypsonians reveals a more widespread attraction between Afro-Trinidadian men and Indo-Trinidadian women, a phenomenon considered offensive by the Indo-Trinidadian community. This should invite author commentary.

In my view, the section of photographs is by far the most riveting, particularly the plates from the late nineteenth century of the newly arrived "Coolies," as East Indian indentured laborers were then called. As historical material, these pictures document visually what life was like in those times and should be treasured as national heritage. The captions beneath the images betray the overarching hegemonic system of colonial domination that brought together Africans and East Indians, placing them in competition with each other, which in turn laid the foundations for the racial inequities and antagonisms of today, which are only touched on in the book. The photos span a great time depth and cast a wide net over different occupations, education, religion, and geography, giving broad coverage to East Indian women who have distinguished themselves in a variety of roles, ranging from cane cutters to high court magistrates. Although this section is the most interesting, it is also rather a jumble and would have benefited from being sorted into sections, with headings and perhaps a brief introduction to each, in order to provide an interpretative frame of reference for readers.

The "ephemera" section is also a potpourri of advertisements, maps, census tables, cartoons, reproduced post cards, short essays, newspaper clippings, drawings, paintings, and photographs, with equal weight given to all. Census tables, which contain basic demographic information about race and gender, could perhaps better have been analyzed by the author to provide a conceptual base for understanding the newspaper clippings, post cards, and so forth. In the final analysis, despite its shortcomings, the book is a compilation of disparate materials hitherto unassembled in one accessible volume, and as such, is a valuable first step to filling gaps in our knowledge about East Indian women in Trinidad and Tobago.

*Mundu Yama Sinta Mira: Womanhood in Curaçao*. RICHENEL ANSANO, JOCELINE CLEMENCIA, JEANETTE COOK & EITHEL MARTIS (eds.). Curaçao: Fundashon Publikashon, 1992. xii + 240 pp. (Cloth n.p.)

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This book was published on the occasion of the third international Caribbean Women's Writers Conference, hosted by Curaçao. It provides valuable information on Curaçao's women but that information is not easy to find as the book contains twenty-nine poems, short stories, and articles on a wide variety of topics, of very uneven quality, and written in four languages. The Caribbean is of course a multilingual area, but the editors do not bother to offer an explanation for their decision to let authors use the language of their choice. It may be considered as an effort to break down boundaries and may also have something to do with the colonial past. In Curaçao, Dutch has been the dominant language for a couple of centuries. Even today it is the official language, but since the 1970s there has been a strong movement for the emancipation of Papiamentu, the local language that is the offspring of contact between Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and African languages. The strength and vivacity of this language are impressive and those fighting for its continuity and recognition deserve all possible support, but because it is spoken by 500,000 people at most, it is not a good vehicle for communication on an international level.

Eight poems, two short stories, and three articles are written in Papiamentu, one poem and five articles in Dutch, five articles in English, and three in Spanish. Writings in Dutch and Papiamentu are accompanied by short summaries and the poems are translated into English. Needless to say, an eight-line English summary of a short story in Papiamentu does not do justice to the author and her work. As for poetry, the translation problems are notorious and most of the English versions presented here have little more in common with the original than their subject matter. In the translation process most poems became considerably longer. One, on the contrary (by Brito), shrank from two pages to only one. It is certain that very few readers know Papiamentu and I wonder whether the authors of the contributions in Papiamentu profit from having their work published in this volume or rather feel punished by remaining unread. Basically the same holds true, of course, for authors of contributions published in Dutch. The book's title is somewhat enigmatic. *Mundu yama sinta mira* is the title

of a *tumba* (a highly popular form of song as well as dance) and can be literally translated as: The name of the world is "... sit and see ..." Joceline Clemencia states in the introduction that this saying "speaks of survival based on strength and the wisdom of timing. Only the shrewd ones, who can perceive the difference between a noisy and apparently strong opponent and their own presumable silence and weakness know that in the end they will win." (p. ix). When I asked native speakers in the Netherlands what *Mundu yama sinta mira* means, they were not familiar with the expression and those who said they knew it disagreed with each other about its meaning.

The most interesting articles in the book are those based on original research. The three authors writing in Spanish focus on the contribution of women to the island's cultural life. Both Ithel Brute and Liesbeth Wit deal with written literature, while Ieteke Witteveen sketches the images of women depicted in *tambu* texts. *Tambu* is a form of music played on drum and hoe. The drum that is played with fingers and the palm of the hand is also called *tambu*, as are the singing and dancing that accompany the music. The word *tambu* can also refer to secret meetings during slavery when *tambu* was played, sung, and danced. The *tambu* was formerly sung by women while today the majority of the singers are men. The *tumba* has developed from the *tambu* and is played with modern instruments. Curaçao's annual *tumba* festival is an important social and cultural event. The article in English by Clemencia on the songs and poems of a highly successful female *tambu* and *tumba*-singer made me eager to know more about this woman, her poetry, and her music. Unfortunately, her work and fascinating life history have not been integrated. Only fragments of the life history are presented, chopped up, in footnotes.

The other English chapters deal with very different topics. Rose Mary Allen reveals the significance of women's role in the migration from Curaçao to Cuba that took place in the beginning of the century. Her work is an important corrective to the general view that this migration was an exclusively male affair. Aart Broek writes on lesbian love in Antillean literature. While lesbianism is very visible in daily life, it has rarely been touched upon in literary writing. As part of a study dealing with women's self-image, Jeanne Henriquez asked forty women, the majority of them welfare mothers, to write a letter to a significant other, on their joys and sorrows. This is fascinating material that deserves more analysis than Henriquez can give in this short article. I look forward to the larger study.

Six of the contributions are in Dutch. Ann Philipps describes the deplorable situation of women from the English-speaking Caribbean islands who work in Curaçao as domestics. Gilbert Cijntje and Frank Quirindongo

give important information on the participation of women in politics in the 1980s. Marijke Schweitz contributes to the yet-to-be-written history of medicine in Curaçao through an interesting sketch of the historical development of health care for pregnancy and birth. Marion Schroen presents information on health insurance for pregnancy and birth but ignores feminism and common sense as well as the findings from decades of medical sociology and women's studies by stating that women are not able and will never be able to judge the obstetric care they receive (p. 169).

*In Search of the Native Population of Pre-Colombian Saba (400-1450 A.D.): Pottery Styles and their Interpretations. Part One.* CORINNE L. HOFMAN. Amsterdam: Natuurwetenschappelijke Studiekring voor het Caraïbisch Gebied, 1993. xiv + 269 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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Corinne Hofman's report on prehistoric pottery from the small Caribbean island of Saba finally provides us with a long overdue investigation on the late prehistory of the Leeward Islands of the Lesser Antilles. The study is based on recent research on Saba by the author and other Dutch colleagues; the results were substantial in terms of excavated surfaces, and volume of recovered ceramic remains. As presented in this publication, the work appears to be essentially the unrevised text of Hofman's doctoral dissertation in Holland. It must be stated at the outset of this review that the work should be evaluated as such, and that some editing of the original text might have been desirable before committing it to the press. The author's contribution is nonetheless considerable, first of all in filling up the gap with a detailed, sophisticated, and well-illustrated account of the ceramic finds, to which are added some already collected materials such as the collection from The Bottom, a site excavated by Josselin de Jong in the 1920s.

The results, nevertheless, demonstrate only too well what we were expecting: an essentially plain, undecorated late ceramic style and technology. It is little wonder that the late period of the Leeward Islands had been so much neglected by early archaeologists. Modern archaeologists, however, have other research objectives, and these are well served by

Hofman's project. Primary among her goals, as is emphasized throughout the volume, was to achieve a better understanding of the social factors responsible for stylistic changes in the island, and to use the stylistic evidence to establish ethnic identities. These valuable aims are, however, weakened by some fundamental failures by the author which are difficult to explain in view of the recent literature on Caribbean archaeology. In contrast to all other recent archaeologists, Hofman never integrates her assemblage analyses, based on morphological and stylistic attributes, into "styles," that is, formal classes of units that are essentially the basic elements of the area's chronology. Instead, the results are presented within a framework of periods, independently derived from C14 dating and stratigraphic evidence; incidentally, no stratigraphic profiles are included in the otherwise detailed accounts of the excavations. Hofman nevertheless successfully argues against assigning the late prehistoric remains to an Elenan classification, valid for eastern Puerto Rico, and which had been tentatively extended to the poorly-known Leeward Islands. A more recently defined Mamoran sub-series, common to all of the Leeward Islands, including Guadeloupe, is now generally accepted as representative of the late prehistory of these islands. This new sub-series had not yet been defined at the time Hofman was writing her thesis, and therefore is not fully used in her work.

There is no doubt that without a proper definition of styles, any discussion of stylistic comparisons and changes will lack substance. This is especially regrettable because what is perhaps the major highlight of the research results, the Kelsey Bay-2 assemblage, is practically unique in the Leeward Islands for revealing a high degree of Chican Ostionoid influences (read "early Taino" culture from the Greater Antilles). One may have wished for a more detailed discussion of this significant manifestation which, in its other modes of decoration as well as its shapes, is more representative of local traditions. For instance, we are still uncertain about the function of the Kelsey Bay sites after reading the work. Indeed, functions are an aspect often cited in connection with the search for social processes. Unfortunately, the functional analysis of the ceramic remains, an approach which has received a considerable amount of attention in ceramic analysis in recent years, and which applies well to plain collections, is practically ignored.

Changes toward the well-established decline in ceramic technology and decoration that has been documented throughout the Lesser Antilles for the late prehistoric period are still begging for better understanding. They are assigned in Hofman's analysis to ruptures in symbolic communication, a process which is certainly worth considering; other processes are not

included, however, and certainly not the case for inter-island mobility and population dynamics. Yet the author is eager to draw interaction areas and frontiers which serve too well to reflect her lack of acquaintance with other islands of the Lesser Antilles, especially the Windwards, where late changes are more complex and better known than is assumed in the report.

A final chapter is devoted to the thorny issue of ethnic identification which I feel receives more attention than it really deserves for Saba. To her credit, Hofman was able to discover an obscure reference in a seventeenth-century French chronicle on the Caribs by Coppier, claiming that Igneri had occupied Saba in early historic times. It is well known, however, that the Leeward Islands were practically depopulated soon after 1500, and this reference dating to the 1650s, problematical especially coming from Coppier's notoriously unreliable accounts, might better be dismissed as pure fantasy. The Island Caribs also inevitably receive some attention which consists essentially of many old questions and old answers which still remain unresolved; this issue is raised in spite of the fact that Caribs are not known to have occupied Saba and that they are not even well established in the Leewards as a whole. It might have been more relevant to pursue the question of Taino ethnicity in view of the Kelsey-2 assemblage but the issue is largely overlooked.

There is no doubt, however, that Hofman's report (and hopefully the forthcoming Volume II) will be received as a fundamental contribution to the long neglected archaeology of the Leeward Islands.

*The Caribbean Islands: Endless Geographical Diversity.* THOMAS D. BOSWELL & DENNIS CONWAY. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992. viii + 240 pp. (Paper US\$ 9.95)

*The Caribbean in the Wider World, 1492-1992: A Regional Geography.* BONHAM C. RICHARDSON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. xvi + 235 pp. (Paper £ 11.95, US\$ 16.95)

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Secondary school and university students and their instructors in the Caribbean, particularly in the archipelago from the Bahamas to Trinidad,

always welcome another text that might add to the meager stock of geographic books written about the region. This is especially true for university students who, perhaps because of their relatively small market size, have few texts written for their level. The recent publication of Thomas D. Boswell and Dennis Conway's *The Caribbean Islands* and Bonham C. Richardson's *The Caribbean in the Wider World, 1492-1992* provides two refreshingly different accounts of the Caribbean that will appeal to markedly different readers in the region and abroad.

None of the authors of these texts is from the Caribbean, though each has had the benefit of extensive experience and field work over the years. Consequently, their perceptions of a number of Caribbean issues or events are forged by their own socio-cultural backgrounds, and some of their interpretations may elicit challenges from local scholars.

Richardson's work impresses the reader as being thoughtful, well researched, and novel in its subject matter. In addition, it exposes an ascent to maturity in the writer when compared with his previous publications on the region. The subtitle suggests that the work is a traditional regional geography, but it is minimally so. The regional aspects are conceptualized in a wider-world context, and this approach deserves attention not only by geographers, but by all who seek to understand the historical development of the Caribbean from a different perspective. In fact, readers may wonder why the book was not labeled an historical geography.

Boswell and Conway's work is mostly a "field guide." It presents excellent fare to the Caribbean visitor, and it lives up to its billing in laying bare the great diversity that characterizes the region. Its biggest contribution to students from the Caribbean and elsewhere is its long first chapter, "Introduction to the Region." In "Part Two, the Itinerary," geographers and informed visitors will find detailed descriptions of travel, laden with facts about the physical landscape and the occasional anecdote.

There is no ambiguity about the kind of book Richardson has attempted to write. In defining the contours of the Caribbean within a world-economy perspective, he uses Immanuel Wallerstein as a point of departure, although he avoids Wallerstein's vehement language and passion in discussing the role of colonial capitalist countries in the region's underdevelopment. Throughout the text, Richardson returns to the theme of the impact that external powers have had from early colonization on "landscapes, ecological problems, settlement forms, demographic characteristics, migration patterns, livelihood strategies, and other variables" (p. 3). He draws heavily on the works of anthropologist Sidney Mintz and geographer David Lowenthal, neither of which inspire most Caribbean geographers as much as they do Richardson. The text curiously persists in the



use of the term "peasantry" to describe Caribbean small-scale farmers – a term that was given wide currency by Mintz but has been rejected by Caribbean economists and geographers, and that only external social scientists appear to understand with clarity.

*The Caribbean in the Wider World, 1492-1992* breaks new ground in regional geography by going beyond the traditional description of present landforms, landscapes, and economic activities to present a scientific explanation for these characteristics. This is commendable. Readers are taken through the small detail of the ecological landscapes of large and small islands before the Spaniards and their contemporaries arrived in the region, through periods of large-scale transformation of the plantation era of slavery, through periods of war and peace, the boom and bust of post-emancipation economies and into the twentieth century of political independence. Richardson gives fair treatment to this century and the economic dependency of the region which was engendered by the historical relationship of the new nations and their metropolises, to the population adjustment brought about by waves of emigration, to the growth of the tourist industry, and to the geopolitical realignment that results from the strategic interests of the United States.

*The Caribbean Islands* takes a markedly different approach. In conceptualization, language, and style, this work is less academic than Richardson's. It is less cerebrally demanding on readers, and the accent is on neither interpretation nor scientific explanation. The substantive appeal of the book lies in the first of its three parts. Here the authors present a comprehensive description of the usual regional topics that many students will find useful: history, landforms, climate and weather, vegetation, the rise and fall of king sugar, urbanization, population and migration, and economic geography. There is an instructive map showing Caribbean tectonics, which helps to explain the geologic evolution of the region, and an informative table that shows 1991 statistics for more than twenty political regional entities (area, per capital GNP, population, and population densities).

Part Two is presented as a ten-day trip or "field guide" through selected islands, from Puerto Rico to Trinidad and Tobago. Except for the few introductory pages to each island or island group, this part of the book is not meant to be read in the usual way. It best serves the tourist or visiting geographer, providing minute geographic detail along selected transects of the respective islands. Several solecisms, typographic errors, and other infelicities detract from the book; readers are told, for example, that Puerto Rico was once labeled "the poor house of the Caribbean," when in fact it was the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Each book appeals to a distinctive audience. Richardson's is recommended to Caribbean and external university students for its thematic approach to regional geography and its window on the historical richness of the Caribbean. High school and university students will find Boswell and Conway's "Part One" particularly informative, and Caribbean sojourners will benefit especially from their "Part Two."

*Nederland en de Nieuwe Wereld.* H.W. VAN DEN DOEL, P.C. EMMER & H.PH. VOGEL. Utrecht: Aula, 1992. 348 pp. (Paper NLG 49.90)

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The increasing popularity of large-scale celebrations of "historic events" can be considered as yet another contemporary ecological threat. Just try to imagine the damage done to our physical and intellectual environment by such mega-media events as the bicentennials of the American and French revolutions. The costs – with all due respect – of all the organizations, committees, festivities, parades, books, films, merchandising activities, and so on, must have been astronomical. The returns on all these inputs, on the other hand, remain rather doubtful. In spite of this, the whole circus went on tour again in 1992, the year of Columbus. Of course, the increased attention to the Amerindians was a generally positive consequence, even though it turned out to be very short-lived. Apart from that, it is hard to discover any positive effects of this celebration, and a lot of (intellectual) capita and raw materials have again been wasted on completely uncalled-for products.

Does the book by Van den Doel, Emmer, and Vogel on the historical relations between the Netherlands and the Americas belong to the latter category? Frankly speaking – although with a little hesitation – it does. The project as such is interesting enough. Since the sixteenth century the Americas have had more territorial, financial, political, cultural, and personal ties with the Netherlands than with many European countries. Reason enough to publish a study on this subject, although comparison of America's ties to Spain and England would have been more interesting. However, as the Americas and the Netherlands are of such a different scale, and the Americas can hardly be considered one entity, such a study requires a

delicate balance between all the elements that constitute the historical process of mutual relations and influences. This can be done either by compiling a sort of encyclopedic description of these relations, or by inviting a few specialists to discuss the theme and analyze "their" part of the relations, by means of the central questions and comparisons emerging from such a debate. Both approaches require a strong editorial hand to make a book out of it.

That is exactly why this book is a failure: it lacks balance, unity, and a rigorous editor. For example, the first chapter, by Pieter Emmer, focuses on the first three centuries of Dutch-American relations, 1580-1875, and is restricted to trade and plantation production, particularly in Brazil, Suriname, and Curaçao. The main question of this section is why the Dutch West-Atlantic activities were considerably less successful than the country's East Indian enterprises. No doubt this subject is interesting, and the author has already written extensively about it elsewhere, but does it belong in a book like this? Why don't we read anything about cultural influences on either side? What about processes of creolization or the emergence of specific race relations? What about the role of religion? How did "the Americans" see "the Dutch"? In what respect were the Netherlands influenced by the New World? And so on. A few of these questions come up in the section on the United States, but they could have been leading questions throughout the whole book.

Furthermore, some of the author's choices concerning what historical information is relevant remain mysterious. For example, we are informed that the island of Saint Martin exported sugar and salt, but no mention is made of the fact that Saint Martin was (and still is) divided between the Netherlands and France. Consequently, nothing is said about the unique position of the Dutch slaves on this island after 1848 – *de jure* still slave, but *de facto* free. What is the logic of giving a detailed description of the arrival of refugees in Curaçao after the Spanish defeat of Bolivar's armies in 1821, and failing to mention Bolivar's own stay on the island in 1816?

The second section of the book, "The Netherlands and Latin America," by Hans Vogel, focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Again, no overarching question at all, only a lot of facts and details. Four pages are spent on a goodwill-trip by Prince Bernhard to Uruguay and Argentina. Luckily, this essay is also detailed in its attention to Latin American influences in the Netherlands in such realms as music, literature, and soccer, which is more than can be said of the other sections in the book. But why is it that Latin America, as far as the Netherlands were concerned, is conceptualized as consisting only of Suriname, Curaçao (and Venezuela), and Argentina? Is there really nothing worth mentioning about the relations

between the Netherlands and Central America and Mexico, and why is Bolivia not even mentioned in the book at all? The most embarrassing part of this section, however, is the end. Here, in a superfluous detailed description of the development of Latin American studies in the Netherlands, Vogel not only exaggerates the role of Leiden University in a rather grotesque way, but, according to the length of his description, also introduces himself as the most important Dutch scholar in this field.

The third and largest section of this book, by Wim van den Doel, focuses on the United States – apparently there were no relations with Canada. It consists of a mixture of *petite histoire* of Dutch migration to “the States,” Dutch views on “the USA,” and a political history of the relations between the two countries. Again, there is no central theme, and some chapters almost drown in quotations and citations. Economic relations appear to be considered of marginal importance, and American cultural influences in the Netherlands are worth only an occasional paragraph. From Van den Doel’s point of view, neither Hollywood, nor Fordism/ Taylorism, nor rock and roll, nor Willem de Kooning for that matter, are of any significance. No more than half a sentence is dedicated to “Korea,” and “Vietnam” is never even mentioned. However, an entire chapter is dedicated to the American presence in the Philippines (1898-1935), “neighbor” of the Dutch East Indies, which is, incidentally, the author’s main specialization.

Thorough editing of the book could (and should) have restored a kind of balance, and could at least have prevented illustrations being placed with the wrong chapters or printed backwards. However, it would not have saved this book. If you are interested in the history of the Dutch presence in the various parts of the Americas, or the American presence (North and South) in the Netherlands, there are some serious (case) studies available, and others still have to be written.

*Diversidad cultural y tensión regional: América Latina y el Caribe.* FRANCINE JÁCOME (ed.). Caracas: Nueva Sociedad, 1993. 143 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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The environment as well as cultural issues have a prominent place on today's political agenda, both domestically and internationally. Francine Jácome's main concern is to examine the interrelationship between the global restructuring process and cultural, political, economic, and environmental factors in the Caribbean.

The book is an interpretation of how past events have shaped the nature of the Caribbean states' relations. The authors argue that the present Caribbean condition cannot be separated from the historical analysis of colonialism and international confrontations in the area. Both conditions continue to contribute to Caribbean fragmentation and difficulty in designing collective responses to common problems. The essays posit that in the Caribbean, politics, history, and geography have obstructed social and economic integration. Moreover, Caribbean and Latin American people have mutually negative perceptions of each other that emerge from ethnic and historic elements (Jácome). The question is whether these neighbors would work together towards a common Caribbean identity. Some efforts in this direction exist. For example, ECLAC and CARICOM have collaborated in proposing economic initiatives; the United Nations Environmental Program has proposed programs on environmental issues; and the Organization of American States has initiated cultural programs. Clara Serfaty's article compares Latin American and Caribbean cultural policies and exchange programs. She argues that existing cultural policies are comprehensive in scope, but that cultural programs tended to be limited in number and not widely disseminated. These programs also require greater coherence and integration.

The Caribbean has been affected by the world economy restructuring process at all levels. For David Lewis, the major problem is the inertia about halting the negative consequences of global change. Neither governments nor the NGOs nor entrepreneurs have developed an effective strategy for change. The marginality of Caribbean economy and industry

in the global world is the most dramatic negative feature of the new economic order. The book ends with a pessimistic view of the future: in the Caribbean differences weigh more than similarities.

*Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas.* IRA BERLIN & PHILIP D. MORGAN (eds.) Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993. viii + 388 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.50, Paper US\$ 17.95)

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In narrowly economic terms the difference between free and slave labor is the difference between renting and owning a factor of production. Free labor is hired for a certain period and paid a wage; slave labor is purchased outright and renders a stream of services over time. A profit-maximizing slave owner will treat slave labor the way he would treat a machine: he will consider all relevant capital and current costs, and he will allocate the labor of the slave among alternative uses to equalize the value of the marginal product derived from each use. Perhaps historians underestimate (and perhaps economists overestimate) how far slave owners can deviate from profit maximization. In a competitive market, the owner who strays will be unable to sell his crops at a normal profit. If he continues, he will be in business to support his plantation instead of the other way round.

But slaves are not machines. Machines have no culture, cannot resist, sabotage, malingering, slow down, or run away, and do not require monitoring or coercion to keep them at work. Thus, profit-seeking plantation owners can control labor only within a complicated web of restraints. Battle lines are drawn between what the owner would like and what the slaves are able to extort. The allocation of labor is always a compromise between these forces, constantly being readjusted as circumstances change. The outcome of the struggle has important consequences for the life and culture of both parties.

In *Cultivation and Culture*, eleven scholars consider the allocation of slave labor and its consequences in a wide variety of times and places. The papers originated in a 1989 conference called "Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas." Four of them, along

with four others, were published in 1991 – first as a special issue of *Slavery & Abolition*, and then as a book edited by Berlin and Morgan entitled *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*.

The quality of the papers is very high – not a weak one in the lot. There are papers on the experience of 500 women on a Jamaican sugar plantation, 1762-1831 (Richard S. Dunn), slaves in coffee and sugar in Saint-Domingue, 1745-92 (David P. Geggus), sugar cultivation and slave life in Antigua before 1800 (Barry Gaspar), the impact of coffee as a second crop in the Antilles, 1730s to 1830s (Michel-Rolph Trouillot), the Georgia cotton belt, 1790-1860 (Joseph P. Reidy), the Alabama-Mississippi Black belt, 1815-1840 (Steven F. Miller), the Tidewater Chesapeake, 1620-1820 (Lorena S. Walsh), the Windward Islands during the slave era (Woodville K. Marshall), Martinique, 1830-1848 (Dale Tomich), the South Carolina upcountry, 1800-1860 (John Campbell), and sugar production in antebellum Louisiana (Roderick A. McDonald). (If you want to read Marshall, Tomich, Campbell, or McDonald, you have your choice of three places.) There is also a valuable comprehensive introduction by Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan.

I particularly admired the contributions by Trouillot, Reidy, Miller, and Campbell. Trouillot's paper is nicely focused and makes the reader aware that coffee production played a different role in different islands at different times. Trouillot captures the interdependence of coffee and sugar production: what happens to coffee depends on what happens to sugar. Older readers will perhaps be reminded of an earlier classic, Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*, on tobacco and sugar.

Reidy shows how customary rights gained by slaves in low country rice production, organized on a task basis, were challenged when the action moved to upcountry cotton plantations. Similarly, Miller shows how the institutions and peoples of the Black belt were formed by their origin in the Chesapeake and low country South Carolina and Georgia and then reshaped by the imperatives of gang production in cotton.

Campbell's fine chapter on market activities in upland South Carolina makes many good points and is especially successful at showing the complex and contradictory effects – the advantages and disadvantages – that came with market participation by slaves. If I were a foundation, I would give a grant to Reidy, Miller, and Campbell to do some comparative history. Should we conclude that it was in particular crops, those associated with gang labor (sugar, cotton; not rice, tobacco, coffee) that slaves suffered most deprivation and loss of autonomy? Should we spend more time looking at the rise and fall of particular crops in particular places?

I have two quibbles. There is nothing on Cuba or Brazil, two of the

most important slave societies of all time. And if you look in the index under prices, profits, or productivity, you will find no entry. This is not entirely the indexer's fault. If I am right, profit is mentioned first on page 124, prices on page 156. The omission of productivity is the indexer's fault, because Lorena S. Walsh treats it at length in her rich discussion of the Chesapeake. The omissions may reflect the absence of economists and economic historians from the list of authors. At this stage we should surely recognize that slave labor was a factor of production embedded in an economic system, and consequently there are insights to be gained from the use of the simple, elementary tools of economic analysis. As scholars (rightly) threw out economic determinism, has the baby disappeared with the bath water?

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*Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony*. KAREN ORDAHL KUPPERMAN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. xiii + 393 pp. (Cloth 59.95)

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The Puritans' settlement of Providence Island, off the coast of Nicaragua, has always seemed an absurd parody of their larger sister settlements in New England. The island colony lasted only eleven years (1633-41), during which the godly colonists diverted their energies to piracy and became hopelessly divided before falling victims to Spanish conquest. Karen Kupperman challenges the received view, arguing that the island remained a serious religious enterprise until the very end and that its history usefully illuminates features of Puritan society in Massachusetts.

The Providence Island Company, which organized and financed the



venture, is familiar to historians because its investors were leading members of the Puritan opposition to Charles I, including John Pym, the Earl of Warwick, Lord Brooke, and Lord Saye and Sele. The meetings of the company occurred at a critical juncture during Charles I's eleven-year personal rule (1629-40). Kupperman uses recent historiographical revisions of the English Civil War to argue that the company was an even more important instrument of opposition than had formerly been acknowledged. She suggests that it was the company rather than political considerations that initially brought these Puritan grandees together for regular business meetings where they gained an "invaluable education in administration and finance" (p. 13). It was only gradually that they began to conspire against the king.

Kupperman shows that the Puritan leaders in England intended Providence Island to be the more important Puritan colony. Providence would not only be a godly society but, unlike Massachusetts, it would also advance the national interest as a striking base against Spanish America and as an economically valuable asset to the mother country. Piracy was not a deviation from Puritan principles, but furthered their objectives. It could be justified, after the Spanish attack on the island in 1635, as a way of weakening the ability of Spain to wage war and undermining the forces of Catholicism while also enriching the company. When the island was conquered, the company was sending more godly colonists to the islands and even planning to expand to Central America.

Kupperman uses the study of Providence to demonstrate, as Stephen Foster and other historians have also contended, that Massachusetts deviated from the intentions of the Puritan leadership in England. Church membership and political office in Providence Island were not exclusive as in Massachusetts, where they were limited to the "elect" or "visible saints" after the mid-1630s. The separation of church and state was more pronounced than in Massachusetts. The almost stifling company supervision of Providence accorded with English Puritan expectations of close imperial ties to the mother country and contrasted with the virtual autonomy exercised by colonists in New England. The company did not allow the differences of climate to deflect Puritan ideals. The Puritan obsession with the family unit resulted in the bizarre arrangement of placing the predominantly male population of Providence into "families" of seven men each. Kupperman also clarifies aspects of New England society in showing that the island venture clearly demonstrates that Puritans accepted both slavery and the pursuit of profit.

*Providence Island* is a major contribution to the history of English colonization in the Caribbean. Kupperman offers a tentative typology of

the conditions necessary for the success of a colonial enterprise based on her analysis of the failure of Providence Island. She demonstrates that the English attributed great significance to Providence and offers persuasive evidence that the project influenced Oliver Cromwell's "Western Design" which led to the English conquest of Jamaica. She shows that Providence contained proportionally more slaves than Barbados in the 1630s despite the island's failure to find a successful staple crop. The planters found slaves cheap labor in contrast to the experience of English colonists elsewhere and assumed from the start that slavery would continue indefinitely. Kupperman claims that Providence was the scene of the first slave revolt in the English Caribbean in 1641, though disappointingly little information is available. Runaways were common and embryonic maroon societies emerged. The company tried to restrain the use of slaves for fear of an uprising.

*Providence Island* also traces early English contact with the Moskito Indians who later became entrenched allies against the Spanish. Kupperman finds a planter class, typical of later English creoles, adverse to military spending and fortress building, although she is wrong to assert that none of the British American colonies supported a professional military establishment (p. 218). Beginning in the 1730s, Jamaica and Antigua paid the British army annual subsidies in return for the policing of their slaves.

Kupperman belongs to a well-established tradition of historians who emphasize the importance of British Caribbean history for an understanding of colonial North America. Her study is a model of such an approach. It is less often acknowledged that *mutatis mutandis* North American history is a vital context for understanding the development of the British Caribbean. Kupperman's intimate acquaintance with the mainland colonies provides invaluable insight into this Puritan experiment in the tropics and contributes to her masterly overview of the subject.

*Die Anfänge der Kirche auf den Karibischen Inseln: Die Geschichte der Bistümer Santo Domingo, Concepción de la Vega, San Juan de Puerto Rico und Santiago de Cuba von ihrer Entstehung (1511/22) bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts.* JOHANNES MEIER. Immensee: Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, 1991. xxxiii + 313 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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Johannes Meier is currently a professor of church history at the University of Bochum. This book was his "habilitation" thesis, and was defended in 1989 at the Theological Faculty of the University of Würzburg. The theme of the work is the very first beginnings of the Church in the Caribbean, in the period when the Caribbean was still "Spanish," from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. It is divided into five chapters. The first deals with the dioceses of the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, Concepción de la Vega, San Juan de Puerto Rico, Santiago de Cuba), referring to the organizational structure of the Church. Chapters 2-4 describe the actors of the institution: the bishops, the secular clergy, and the religious missionaries. The last chapter, and the most interesting one, focuses on the "people of God," including the Amerindians, the whites, and the Africans. The book opens with a lengthy list of the author's sources, both archival (present especially in the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla) and published, including contemporary works.

The first chapter contains many details about the construction of cathedrals and the establishment of parishes and churches, as well as material on their destruction due to natural causes of military attacks because of the Spanish-British rivalry. The author also shows the importance of the law of patronage in the process of establishing dioceses and nominating the bishops. The second chapter presents biographical details of four bishops – Alessandro Geraldini, Rodrigo de Bastidas, Agustín Dávila y Padilla, and Bernardo de Balbuena. It is impressive to read about the long periods of time the bishops were absent from their Caribbean dioceses. For example, for the diocese of Santo Domingo the ratio between residence and absence was 2:1. The dioceses of the Caribbean enjoyed little prestige. By 1620 the Caribbean had an established Church hierarchy and structure which functioned almost unchanged until the end of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 3 describes the activities of the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Mercedaries, the Jesuits, and congregations of religious sisters. The analysis is enriched by a focus on the rivalry between the secular and religious clergy, and between the religious congregations. Meier gives an excellent description of the first Dominican community, guided by Friar Pedro de Córdoba, established in La Española. That community was responsible for having initiated the debate about the rights of the indigenous peoples in 1511; in this context, the author presents the well known sermons of Anton de Montesinos, the spokesman of that community. Much more famous has become Bartolomé de las Casas, who wrote the first history of the Caribbean, and Meier is correct not to present him as an isolated figure.

Finally, treatment of indigenous populations is divided into six sub-themes: their situation at the outset of the conquest; ecclesiastical protests against the conquest; the struggle for the reform of the laws, referring also to the destruction of the indigenous population; christianizing efforts for the remaining living Amerindians; pastoral work among the Indians in the Provincial Council of Santo Domingo (1622-23), which repeatedly doubted their religious capacity and blamed them for all kinds of vices. The section about the whites treats the Spaniards in the Caribbean; the ecclesiastical life of the lay people; the *cofradías* and the religious feasts. This last discussion ends with the interesting conclusion that the Spanish theater, in most adverse situations in the Caribbean, served in the spiritual formation of the people of this region. Finally, Meier turns to the Afro-Americans, dealing first with the institution of black slavery in the Spanish Caribbean, then the relationship between the Church and black slavery and the lack of pastoral attention to the slaves. He concludes that the Church could not fight against slavery because many of its institutions were slave owners who obtained profits from the labor force of the slaves.

This book fills a gap: until now we had no work about the early establishment of the Church in the Caribbean. It is an accurate book of history, and in the footnotes the reader will find a wealth of valuable information. Nevertheless, the author occasionally indulges in an apologetic discourse, defending the competence of the bishops and underestimating the "criminal" role of the institutional Church in "the destruction of the West Indies." But the book's importance, as a study in Caribbean history, is shown by the fact that editions in Spanish and English are currently being prepared.

*Cedulants and Capitulants: The Politics of the Coloured Opposition in the Slave Society of Trinidad, 1783-1838.* CARL C. CAMPBELL. Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria Publishing, 1992. xv + 429 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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Over the past twenty years there has been renewed scholarly interest in the free coloreds as historians seek to shed additional light on New World slave societies. Carl Campbell's study of Trinidad between 1783 and the 1838 abolition of slavery covers an important period when the island was under both Spanish and British rule. It concentrates on the free coloreds from a crucial transitional stage in their fortunes to a time when they made strident protests against the systematic suppression of their rights.

Campbell rightly perceives the 1783 Spanish Cedula, which provided vitally important guarantees for free coloreds' ability to own land, as a significant watershed in the fortunes of the group. For it constituted a constant point of reference and source of contention after 1797. Amidst British attempts to deny them rights that they had previously enjoyed under the rule of the military governor, José Maria Chacon, the island's free colored leadership argued that their position should be left undisturbed or even enhanced inasmuch as the British had not abrogated the terms of the Cedula. Concerned lest the Trinidad free coloreds should occupy a societal position that deviated unduly from the norms established in other British Caribbean colonies, successive British civilian governors contrived to steer a middle road in the resolution of problems engendered by the mounting demands of the free coloreds and the rear guard action that the whites increasingly sought to adopt.

Two distinct phases are apparent in the free coloreds' quest for an enhancement of their civil rights. The first, led by Dr. John Baptiste Philip and the free colored planters of the Naparimas, tended to be somewhat elitist and concentrated on legal/constitutional efforts. Because a number of these individuals had obtained overseas an education that was equal to or exceeded that of their white counterparts, were professionals, or owned substantial property, authorities could not easily dismiss their demands in the early nineteenth century for the removal of disabilities under which they labored. This was the period, after all, when revolutionary rumblings were reverberating throughout the Western world and the philosophy that undergirded slave society was increasingly attacked both from within the

colonies and in Great Britain. The free colored leadership capitalized on the growth of liberalism to stake their claim for civil rights.

The second phase of the free colored struggle, argues Campbell, was led by a "younger and less conservative" group that emerged around the capital city of Port of Spain and challenged "the monopoly of the elite free coloured planters as spokesmen for free coloureds" (p. 256). Clearly anti-establishment in its rhetoric, this group, under the leadership of Rev. Francis DeRidder, a free colored Roman Catholic priest, pressed assiduously for political and social change at all levels. This group merged beautifully the free coloreds' demands for an improvement in their societal position with the equally important imperative of removing disabilities from the numerous Roman Catholics who constituted the vast majority of the island's non-white population. The Port of Spain movement attacked racism within the church as a part of its campaign to promote equality for free coloreds and enhance the dignity of all individuals of African ancestry. The radical phase of the free colored struggle, which took place mostly in the urban centers and which, Campbell argues, had all the makings of an urban resistance movement, built on the gains of the elite, though ultimately it suffered as a result of the negative publicity it received from its leaders' actions.

Although this book was published in 1992, the author admits that the text "was established in the 1970s and makes only passing reference to some works published in and after 1985." His conclusions and arguments are, therefore, not informed by most of the recent valuable scholarship on the group in other islands that has appeared since 1985. Moreover, while Campbell rightly highlights the divisions within the free colored leadership on the island, especially on the issue of slave amelioration, he leaves largely unanswered the question of the free coloreds' attitude towards slave emancipation. What, for example, was the nature of relationships between free coloreds and slaves? What quality of interaction, if any, existed between Trinidad's free coloreds with their counterparts in other British Caribbean slave societies? Were they in contact with individuals from the French islands, where free coloreds already enjoyed rights that far exceeded those of their counterparts in the British islands? Recent scholarship has shown that during the Napoleonic Wars and in the immediate wake of the Haitian Revolution free coloreds from the French islands actively fostered revolutionary rhetoric both to further narrow national/political interests and to exchange the lot of their disenfranchised colleagues in the British Caribbean. What institutions did the free colored communities create for themselves and their descendants? These are but a few of the questions which demand considerable attention if we are to

understand fully the role of the free coloreds in Trinidad during a crucial period of its societal evolution. Despite some glaring errors which normally should have been detected by the copy editors, we are thankful to the publishers for finally making this important study available to the scholarly community.

*Indenture and Abolition: Sacrifice and Survival on the Guyanese Sugar Plantations.* BASDEO MANGRU. Toronto: TSAR, 1993. xiii + 146 pp. (Paper US\$ 17.95)

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Some 200 million children are toiling in deplorable conditions throughout the world today to provide merchandise for the markets of the developed countries. It is, therefore, not surprising that when slavery was abolished in the 1830s and the masters rather than the exploited received compensation, the landowners, financiers, merchants, and industrialists who owned the British Empire searched for an easily-controlled body of new workers who would perform the harsh labor that sugar production requires in the Caribbean. Many people are astonished to find that a majority of the population in a small state in northern South America is descended from almost 240,000 indentured laborers who were transported from the Indian subcontinent between 1838 and 1917. Significant numbers of East Indians also went to Trinidad, Jamaica, Suriname, Mauritius, Fiji, and South Africa.

Basdeo Mangru, a native of Guyana who now teaches in New York, has done extensive research into conditions and attitudes in India where the recruitment took place, the arduous voyage to the New World, and the life endured and then transformed by these East Indian indentured laborers. The work under review contains seven excellent essays which will interest general readers as well as specialists. Mangru begins at the beginning. Who was recruited? Who did the recruiting? What were the actual conditions at the subdepots and the main depot in Calcutta? The government of India tried, not always successfully, to protect the lives of the indentured laborers by granting authority to a Protector of Emigrants and a Government Medical Inspector of Emigrants. Forty women were to be shipped with each one hundred men.

The cultural shock was sometimes devastating for the emigrants. A long sea voyage was followed by arrival at a plantation where the regulations were intimidating, the hours excessive, the work exhausting, and punishment severe. Indentured for a term of five years with return passage promised if they remained for an additional five years, most opted to settle in British Guiana. Life had never been easy in the rural areas of India. Caste differences among the Hindus rapidly disappeared before the pitiless reality of plantation life; Hindu-Muslim relations were remarkably tranquil. It was more difficult for the mostly illiterate East Indians to confront a creole society that was mainly Christian and African though it also contained small but important British, Portuguese, Chinese, and Amerindian minorities.

One of Mangru's finest chapters assesses the career of James Crosby, Immigrant Agent-General in British Guiana between 1858 and 1880. Cambridge-educated and married to an heiress from St. Vincent, Crosby, a genuinely just and fair human being, would not permit the lust for profits to trample upon the laws and regulations designed to protect the indentured laborers. Affectionately known as "Papa" to the East Indians, he struggled to protect them from the sugar barons and from Governors who were overly friendly with the plantation owners. He checked the immigrant vessels when they arrived, investigated plantations unannounced, and represented the indentured laborers in court.

As the number of East Indians increased, Mangru notes, the significance of their religious festivals served as a way to express themselves in a hostile environment. The plantation managers were not unsympathetic; the festivals allowed the East Indians to release tension and frustrations after which it was hoped they would return happily to work. Africans and Christian missionaries had reservations. One cannot but reflect upon the attempt to create unified nations in culturally plural societies. Not wanting to pay the return fare to India and also wishing to retain a reserve proletariat, the planters provided half-hearted support to several unsuccessful government-sponsored land settlement schemes. The East Indians did, however, achieve a tremendous success when they turned to rice farming.

As the East Indians became more confident and sure of themselves, the once docile work force turned to strikes, mass disturbances, and violence to improve working conditions and increase wages. Mangru vividly describes the great strike at the Rose Hall plantation in 1913 which involved 2,500 East Indians. The chief driver, an East Indian, was cordially detested; fifteen people were killed when the manager tried to remove five strike leaders. Management's harsh and arbitrary policies caused 141 strikes between 1900 and 1913. The growing sense of injustice and



repression coincided with the rapid growth of an anti-indenture campaign in India where nationalists denounced the system as degrading and close to slavery. By 1915, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, deeply sympathetic himself to Indian aspirations for self-government, informed the British government that indenture would have to go.

The last two essays of the book contain a fine evaluation of the campaign to abolish indenture, which finally succeeded in 1917, and the unsuccessful attempts to replace it with something more generous so that British Guiana, and several other colonies, might continue to attract East Indian immigrants. Mangru's book, especially his introduction, cannot be read without compelling one to think about the Guyanese election of 1992, the first free and fair vote since 1964. Cheddi Jagan, son of East Indian sugar workers, became president and has attempted to reconcile blacks and East Indians after the racial discord associated with Forbes Burnham, Desmond Hoyte, and the People's National Congress. The next few years could be decisive for the Guyanese as they work to create a society in which all citizens – no matter what their ethnic heritage – will have the opportunity to undertake some form of creative activity.

*Immigratie en ontwikkeling: Emancipatie van contractanten.* LILA GOBARDHAN-RAMBOCUS & MAURITS S. HASSANKHAN (eds.). Paramaribo: Anton de Kom Universiteit, 1993. 262 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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The editors of *Immigratie en ontwikkeling* use the year 1993 as grounds for publishing this volume on immigration and its aftermath. 1993 was 140 years after the first Chinese migrated to Suriname, 130 years since the abolition of slavery, and 120 years since the first immigrants from India set foot in this Dutch colony. Even though the reason for publication seems dragged in by the head and shoulders, it certainly does not mean that this book is redundant. The history of the cultural, social, political, and economic developments of the Asian population groups is still largely virgin territory.

The editors divide the ten contributions into three parts: the first chapters are general in character, covering immigration and its consequences,

demographic developments, and political evolution. The second group discusses the history of the three Asian groups: Chinese, East Indians or Hindostani, and Javanese. The third focuses on the development of three languages: Suriname Dutch, Sarnami (the language of the East Indians), and Suriname Javanese.

Maurits Hassankhan begins with a short survey of extant literature on Asian migration and its effects. He zooms through more than one hundred years of cultural, political, and socio-economic history. It leaves one gasping for air, and too many topics, such as public health and legal aspects, are dispensed with in a couple of sentences. Cultural developments also get short shrift: "Culturally we see a two-fold development: acculturation and integration on the one hand and conservatism and strengthening of certain cultural customs on the other. This causes tension between these two aspects of cultural developments" (pp. 28-29). And that's it. His is the only contribution that, albeit tentatively, places the Suriname experience in a Caribbean perspective.

The two demographic articles are the least satisfying chapters of the book. The first page of Humphrey Lamur's, on the influence of migration on demographic history, is telling. According to Lamur, Javanese migration started in 1893, even though the correct year, 1890, is given by Hassan-khan. More disappointing is that Lamur was not willing to differentiate between direct demographic effects (the number of immigrants) and indirect effects (birth and death). "A separate calculation or estimate of these two demographic consequences would require an extensive, rather technical analysis of fertility and mortality" (pp. 36-38). Instead, Lamur recycles the data he published more than two decades ago. The second demographic contribution, by Lamur, S. Badloe, and B. Sukhai, on demographic structure and reproduction rituals among East Indian contract laborers, is potentially the most interesting article of the book. Unfortunately, it shows few vital signs; maybe this baby was born prematurely.

The two political articles are uneven. Lila Gobardhan-Rambocus lists the actions in what she calls the struggle for universal suffrage. J.L. Egger analyzes ethnicity and nation building. It is regrettable that Egger had, or took, only twenty-seven pages to discuss this exceedingly important topic. He touches upon some intriguing points, but can't or won't work them out. He assumes that his readers have a thorough background knowledge already, given sentences like "[a] review of the political biography of Lachmon [the political leader of the East Indians since time immemorial] led to a vehement exchange of letters in the press" (p. 250). Egger reveals the contents of neither review nor letters.

The two contributions in the second category give an adequate review of the history of the Chinese, and East Indians and Javanese. Neither William Man A Hing nor Hassankhan compares the Chinese and East Indian experiences with those of their compatriots elsewhere in the Caribbean. The two authors reach different conclusions about integration: Man A Hing states that the Chinese have almost completely integrated and ethnic organizations and newspapers strengthen this process (p. 61). Hassankhan writes that the East Indians and Javanese did not readily integrate into Suriname society and searched for security in their own group by establishing ethnic associations and organizing their own social, cultural, and religious activities. Thus the Chinese on the one hand and the East Indians and Javanese on the other seem to have reacted very differently to permanent residence in Suriname. This is a crucial issue in the development of the Asian groups, but neither Man A Hing nor Hassankhan even begins to explain why and how this has happened.

The final section on languages is well written and the most coherent part of the volume, no doubt because Gobardhan-Rambocus was involved in authoring all three articles. Each one gives a good review of the secondary literature. Again one misses comparisons, for example, with Trinidad, regarding the importance and development of the language of the East Indians.

Duplications, inconsistencies (e.g., bibliographic references and dates), and a general lack of editorial care make *Immigratie en ontwikkeling* a rather loose collection of essays. Yet it certainly whets the appetite for more. This volume is only the appetizer to what is hopefully a splendid main course: Maurits Hassankhan (Anton de Kom Universiteit), Humphrey Lamur (Universiteit van Amsterdam), and Johan Sarmo (Ministry of Education in Suriname) are currently involved in an extensive oral history project to record the experiences of East Indian and Javanese contract laborers.

*Capitalism in Colonial Puerto Rico: Central San Vicente in the Late Nineteenth Century.* TERESITA MARTÍNEZ-VERGNE. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992. 189 pp. (Cloth US\$ 27.95)

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*Capitalism in Colonial Puerto Rico* is an important contribution to Puerto Rican and Caribbean historiography. This study of Puerto Rico's first sugar *central* in the 1870s-1880s deepens the debate on the social and economic implications of U.S. rule in Puerto Rico after 1898, a discussion that gains resonance as the centennial of the Spanish-American War approaches.

Central San Vicente was established in Vega Baja in 1873 – the year of slave emancipation in Puerto Rico. San Vicente was one of fifteen sugar *centrales* that operated in Puerto Rico before 1898. While many of these *centrales* faced difficulties, especially in the 1880s, San Vicente soon failed spectacularly. It went bankrupt in 1880 and was placed in receivership from 1883 until 1887, when Martínez's account closes.

The argument is presented in four sections: Martínez first discusses the writings of agrarian reformers in the 1860s-1880s with respect to the future of Puerto Rico's sugar industry. In this literature, she contends, a strong defense was made of "division of labor" between field and sugarmill, that is, the separation of cultivation from processing under different owners/administrators. Martínez claims that both the reformers and later (especially recent) historians focused mostly on the field-mill separation as a panacea. She further contends that the Puerto Rican sugar industry's difficulties before 1898 have been overly attributed to the industry's inability to construct a "division of labor."

Through her study of San Vicente, Martínez aims to prove that the industry was, rather, crippled by the lack of long-term investment capital and of basic infrastructure. She discusses the *central's* history in separate chapters on its land, capital, and labor. On the matter of land, she demonstrates how Pablo Igaravidez, San Vicente's founder, did not follow the prescription of "division of labor" in establishing the *central*. Through credit-based purchases as well as by marriage, Igaravidez acquired 14,000 acres. Martínez, however, finds that this was not fatal to the project, and invokes the additional value of land as a credit vehicle (pp. 85, 100, 133). While Martínez's argument is well made, one might remain unpersuaded of

the futility of "division of labor" based on the experience of a soon-bankrupt landholding *central*.

Martínez also takes on widely-accepted arguments about credit shortage in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. The real problem, as she contends, were the conditions of credit, which discouraged large-scale, long-term lending. She lucidly explains the diverse and complex credit channels used by Igaravidez for San Vicente's operations. Her discussion of the *central*'s bankruptcy proceedings is exemplary in its use of legal materials in historical analysis. She also suggests the possibility that San Vicente's basic problem may have been Igaravidez's mismanagement and embezzlement, for which he was jailed in 1883-87. (In general, however, "Don Leonardo" is portrayed rather heroically, as a bold entrepreneur "punished by short-sighted contemporaries" – p. 101.)

The chapter on labor is perhaps the book's most provocative. Here, Martínez finds that San Vicente satisfied its labor demand; only the laborer's "indiscipline" caused some irritation. It was less that Vega Baja laborers (including ex-slaves) resisted proletarianization than that they were relatively impervious to it, given long-autonomous peasant patterns and/or artisanal skills in mill labor. Though payment was largely in cash, San Vicente's administrators used "personalized wage payment practices" and "paternalistic benefits," as well as "modern wage incentives"; thus Martínez characterizes San Vicente as a "hybrid."

The strongest implications of *Capitalism in Colonial Puerto Rico* concern the "hybridness" that Martínez had also detected in San Vicente's trajectory in landholding and credit. If the fifteen Puerto Rican *centrales* of the nineteenth century were historical "hybrids" – with a "persistence of noncapitalist relations within capitalist structures" (p. 114) – one begins to wonder about the labor patterns of the corporate sugar centrals of twentieth-century Puerto Rico. Largely on the basis of Sidney Mintz's pathbreaking work in the 1950s, Puerto Rico's sugar *centrales* have been considered paradigmatic, capitalist "land-and-factory combines" employing a similarly paradigmatic rural proletariat. Yet most of the "hybrid" sugar *centrales* established in Puerto Rico in the 1870s-1890s did not fail, and existed under creole ownership into the twentieth century. San Vicente itself was sold, reorganized and back in production by 1900. These *centrales*, endowed with highly diverse and little-studied labor patterns and intricate combinations of land ownership, land leasing, and "division of labor" with *colonos*, produced more than half of Puerto Rico's output until the 1920s. Most of the Puerto Rican-owned sugar *centrales*, especially those which (like San Vicente) were located on the north coast, remained in production until the 1950s. The North American

corporate *centrales* themselves exhibit similar, surprisingly “noncapitalist” features, especially in their patterns of agricultural labor. Martínez’s refreshing sense of the “hybridness” and historicity of Puerto Rican sugar *centrales* before 1898 has unexpected consequences for long-standing approaches on the social relations of Puerto Rican sugar production in the era of U.S. rule.

*La Guadeloupe 1875-1914: Les soubresauts d'une société pluri-ethnique ou les ambiguïtés de l'assimilation.* HENRIETTE LEVILLAIN (ed.). Paris: Autrement, 1994. 241 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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The twenty-eighth volume of the journal *Autrement* was a special issue devoted to the study of the years 1875-1914 in Guadeloupe. Prior to that publication, there existed no survey of the period. It is one of those moments in history that has attracted little attention from researchers. Yet, as Henriette Levillain, coordinator of the volume, notes: “that period played a leading part in the destiny of the French Antilles, especially in the case of Guadeloupe. Within one generation, Guadeloupe went from an archaic to a modern society. Such a sudden change brought about advancement. However, it also came with its share of tension, ambiguities, and racial and social conflicts” (p. 12).

The change occurred with an economic crisis in the background. A new colonial system was generated by a decaying plantation system. The Third Republic regime in France was tolerant towards colored people. The latter were being juridically and politically integrated into the “mother country,” the “metropole.” That new policy was a paradox. At least that is Julien Mérimon’s analysis in “La France et ses Antilles, vers la citoyenneté intégrale” (pp. 48-58). The newly born social layers, deeply influenced by the dying plantation system, were not ready to face such a change. Therein lies the basic problem of a period which a dozen researchers from various fields (history, economics, law, ethnology, literature) have written about in the volume under review.

Claude Thiébaud’s “Comment peut-on être créole?” recalls the original

ambiguities of the word "creole." To Thiébault, the evolution of the meaning reflects the various expressions of the quest for identity at different decisive moments in history (pp. 18-33). Josette Fallope, a historian of the nineteenth century in Guadeloupe, contributed two essays to the volume – "La politique d'assimilation et ses résistances" (pp. 34-37) and "Une société en mutation" (pp. 78-89). She accounts for the social changes and rifts born of the transposition of the former conflicts to the conditions of the end of the nineteenth century. Alongside a systematic analysis, the volume offers interesting incursions into the life of contemporary figures: Claude Hoton's biographical essay "Ernest Souques, le manipulateur de nègres" (pp. 132-55) is particularly striking. Souques was then the island's major sugar cane factory owner. He remains the last great political figure of the white plantocracy. The literary experience of his compatriot Saint-John Perse is described by Henriette Levillain in "L'Enfance de Saint-John Perse" (pp. 190-99). The latter was a famous poet who emerged from the local white social group, the White Creoles.

In contrast to that biography, Fred Hermantin's "Mémoire de Noir" (pp. 200-22) is a fictional but credible story about the life of a black man in the nineteenth century. The setting of the story is the abolition of slavery in 1848. But the extract of the autobiographical diary kept by Elodie Jourdain, "Nostalgie de Békée," accurately accounts for the ambiguities of the period. Elodie Jourdain was a young white creole and the author of one of the first scientific linguistic descriptions of the creole language. In that autobiography, she artlessly names the local population that lay in the background of her childhood in Martinique and Guadeloupe "our negroes." With the choice of this term, she unconsciously expresses the despair experienced by the whites in the face of what they had called "a substitution policy." Paradoxically, the colored population, although numerically larger, never tried to accede to land ownership and political management. The setting up of a policy of subsidies was their only attempt at exercising their potential political power; the image of the white owner remained unchanged.

The drawback of the volume is that it remains a general and fragmented overview of the period. It offers a juxtaposition of analyses rather than a convergence of interdisciplinary approaches. The analysis of the economic and social structures is unfortunately not carried out from an inside perspective. A more analytical approach would have allowed it to avoid the weaknesses of a classical global approach. An example of that flaw is the use of the concept of "black bourgeoisie," a concept that fails to account for the complexity of the social strata reality in that period. That new "black bourgeoisie," however distinct from the former mulatto middle

class, would have been a nonentity if the French political regime had decided so. In short, one of the basic problems, which was not posed in the volume, is whether the "black bourgeoisie" had a dynamic process of its own.

*Fort de France au début du siècle.* SOLANGE CONTOUR. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994. 224 pp. (Paper 200 FF)

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This illustrated volume follows in the footsteps of two others of the same type by the same author, both focused on the Martiniquan city of Saint Pierre, which were published in 1988 and 1989. The approach consists of juxtaposing photographs (here roughly 200) and texts – literary passages, journalistic quotations, and even pieces from private family archives. Saint Pierre was the uncontested hub of commercial and administrative activities in Martinique until it was buried under the volcanic ash of Mont Pelée in 1902. Fort de France, the current capital of Martinique (known as Fort Royal until 1802) thus owes its prominence to the catastrophe that divided the island's history profoundly in two: before and after the eruption.

The work is arranged in topographical order and in some cases presents several views of a single place. The first chapter traces the role of the city in the history and geography of the island. The next hundred pages are devoted to sites and monuments of the urban center and events in the city's political life, as well as problems that marked the first several decades of the twentieth century such as crime, fires, and the 1903 hurricane.

The dating and identification of photographs are, unfortunately, very cryptic. Although the origins of some illustrations are indicated (most often being traced to private collections), not a single photograph bears the date of publication, documents the size or, most important, tells us whether the image is taken from a postcard, an amateur snapshot, or a professional photograph. Some are clearly engravings or drawings, but none mention authorship. And all the illustrations of a particular type (postcards, for example) could usefully have been reproduced in a uniform format, since they constitute a single genre – which is at least as interesting as the subjects they depict.



It is also disappointing that the texts placed on the illustrations' facing pages have so little to do with the images themselves – at least at the beginning of the book. It would not have been necessary, for example, to go back to the dawn of colonization, around 1639, in a text accompanying pictures from the period 1900-14. If the idea was to adopt a broader historical perspective, wouldn't it have made more sense to say something about the original Amerindian inhabitants of the area that was to become known in Fort Royal as Cul-de-Sac Bay, whose archaeological legacy is illustrated via postcards sold at the Departmental Museum?

There is no doubt that Martinique and its way of life have changed and evolved, and one of the goals of this type of historic-nostalgia publication is to document those shifts. But perhaps more interesting for present purposes are the fundamental changes that have occurred in our gaze toward the land and its inhabitants.

Contour focuses her attention on the early years of this century – the golden age of the postcard, and especially the colonial postcard from the Antilles and West Africa. These visual testimonies are not lacking in stereotypical character. Unlike the ordinary photo or the portrait, the postcard is tied into a marketing of the exotic in which both seller and buyer are aware that the document is intended, not for them, but for someone else. In the past as in the present, one chose a card with the addressee in mind, trying to share with that faraway person something of one's own feeling of exoticized distance.

To whom were postcards from Martinique sent? In all likelihood, they went to metropolitan France, to the relatives of passing tourists, steamship customers, or military men posted on the island. An inventory of the subjects treated reveals that most of the photographs are composed with an external audience in mind and are designed to produce a comforting confirmation of the value of colonial development. There are many general views of the site, of the harbor, and of the "Baie des Flamands" (whose name commemorates the expulsion of the Dutch from Brazil), the port for many large tourists ships and, in earlier times, for war ships. There are also views of most of the official monuments, military complexes, and harbor facilities. These reassure the postcard reader that the colony is safely guarded, perfectly ringed by its military installations, its arsenals, its forts, and its barracks. Strategic administrative control is equally important, so it is not surprising to find images of the court house, the city hall, the cathedral, and various government buildings.

These historic buildings, and even their current (frequently restored) appearance, in many ways reflect a deep familiarity with similar structures in metropolitan France. One has only to think of the Place du Palais de

Justice, with its statue of the famous historical figure (in this case, Victor Schoelcher), and its trees forming a square in the middle of a grillwork enclosure. Or again, the Place de la Cathédrale. In these images, monuments take up more space than people do, even if they're photographed on a Bastille Day on the city's Savane. Historic figures, such as the Empress Josephine or Victor Schoelcher, hold pride of place in this repertoire and some of the documentation reflects the interest of the editors (and perhaps also their readers) in both the restoration and the abolition of slavery.

The goings and comings of governors are also depicted, as well as commercial buildings such as that of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, which had a monopoly on transportation to the metropole, owned its own dock, and is represented on a postcard by "The arrival of the mail." But the most significant documents, of course, are the street and market scenes, which capture crowds of people and a variety of occupations.

Today, there are novelty boutiques on the former rue Saint Louis that still stock a limited number of sepia postcards, displayed on creaky revolving frames. But the bulk of postcard production is now distributed through places with a high concentration of tourists and its repertoire of images is completely changed; in some, Martiniquan women are made to look almost as if they'd emerged directly from a Barbie doll box.

The most moving images in this book are those scenes that have no particular focal point, street scenes in which passers-by are unaware of being photographed or shots of very special moments in Martiniquan social life. These documents are worthy of our attention for the contrast they provide with today's postcard, or even other photographic images of Martinique and the rest of the Antilles. These latter are essentially designed for an external gaze, which they flatter through comforting confirmation of the expected: beaches, palm trees, sand, and blue sky. Clearly, there has been a significant change; none of the historic views propose this sort of escape, none are so dehumanized and anonymous. A century ago, the photographers' goals were, rather, to highlight the industriousness and activity of the Antilles, even as they largely neglected the inhabitants themselves. Today, the images do no better in conveying the view of the inhabitants, but concentrate instead on touristic activities. Their nuanced blues and greens catch none of the true colors of the sky and sea, and the street scenes and landscapes are reduced to generic stereotypes from any island, from any hotel. At least the postcards of an earlier era, with the exception of those centered on official buildings, communicated a sense of spontaneity, of images taken from real life. This is why these deserve to have been given a more prominent place in the work under review.

*Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica*. ROBERT J. STEWART. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992. xxi + 254 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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Published in 1982, Mary Turner's *Slaves and Missionaries* remains a compelling, and arguably the definitive, analysis of the complex interaction between the traditional belief systems of Jamaica's enslaved population and the Baptist and Methodist faiths brought to the island by British and African-American missionaries around the turn of the eighteenth century. What we have lacked, and what to a large extent is supplied by Robert J. Stewart's thoroughly researched monograph, is a study that picks up the themes so central to Turner's work and carries them through the ending of chattel slavery into the post-emancipation period.

As the title of his book suggests, Stewart's concern is to expose the central and infinitely complex part played by religion, by Roman Catholic as well as Protestant churchmen, by emancipated Christian believers of various denominations and sects, and by those Africans and African-Jamaicans who clung tenaciously to their traditional beliefs and practices, in what proved to be the turbulent transition from chattel to wage slavery.

Stewart has made excellent use of the voluminous materials penned by European missionaries, and lodged mainly in British archives, about all facets of their frequently difficult and disappointing experiences in Jamaica. In the eyes of an often overtly hostile planter elite, Methodist and Baptist missionaries especially had long been depicted as dangerous trouble makers, as the influential allies of a potentially rebellious enslaved population. What emerges from Stewart's study is the perhaps not entirely surprising thesis that in reality the vast majority of these churchmen did not conform to the role devised for them by the planter class. On the contrary, these leading players on the stage of mid-nineteenth-century Jamaica shared, and to a considerable degree were trapped by, racial attitudes which were not to be seriously undermined, let alone exploded, with the ending of chattel slavery. In this respect, as in many others, there was to be a profoundly significant element of continuity between the slavery and immediate post-slavery periods.

With but few exceptions, the racial and socio-economic prejudices of Methodist and Baptist missionaries were so deeply entrenched that they

precluded the possibility of complete identification with, and the furtherance of, the urgent social and economic needs of emancipated African-Jamaicans. European church leaders in mid-nineteenth-century Jamaica would not place themselves in the vanguard of the struggle to secure a truly radical re-ordering of the island's racial and socio-economic structure. Yet, as Stewart also convincingly argues, neither would they conform completely to the part devised for them by elite planters in the immediate post-emancipation period. As far as they were able, most Baptist and Methodist churchmen resisted any and all attempts by the planter class to employ them as agents of social control. It could be said that, as had been the case since they first set foot in Jamaica, amelioration and reform, rather than the revolutionary overthrow of the existing social, economic, and racial order, remained the top priority of Baptist and Methodist churchmen in the years leading up to the Morant Bay Rebellion.

If successive Methodist and Baptist missionaries in Jamaica had long experienced an uneasy, and often troubled, relationship with the island's planter class, then much the same was also true of their relations with those Africans and African-Jamaicans they sought to convert to their particular brand of Protestant Christianity. What was true of Britain's other sugar islands, and of the southern United States, beginning in the late eighteenth century was also true of Jamaica: evangelical Protestant Christianity was not foisted on an unwilling and totally hostile enslaved population.

Rather, it was the case that an increasing number of African-Jamaicans warmly embraced an evangelical Protestant Christianity which, as Sylvia Frey has argued in the case of the American South, they "critically appropriated" for their own purposes. An essentially syncretic process produced beliefs, rituals, and imperatives which did not conform to those envisaged by European missionaries.

In many ways confirming Frey's findings for the early national South, Stewart convincingly argues that European missionaries were never completely successful in their attempts to define and direct the beliefs and practices of their converts; that as it evolved through the nineteenth century, African-Jamaican Protestant Christianity was never an unthinking, uncritical replica of the European ideal espoused by metropolitan ministers. On the contrary, Stewart contends, African-Jamaican Protestantism emerged as a distinctive, and vitally important, focal point in the definition of cultural identity. Both before and after the ending of chattel slavery it was of critical significance in the forging of resistance to planter and missionary attempts to impose their own particular cultural hegemonies. If anything, and as in the southern United States, in racially mixed Baptist and Methodist congregations, where African-Jamaicans dominated, Euro-

pean forms and ideals did not persist intact. In fact, Stewart argues, the very reverse was true: those forms and ideals were to be profoundly influenced by African-Jamaican imperatives which, to a significant degree, were informed by the persistence of traditional beliefs and modes of worship. As Stewart puts it, "[t]he process was not one of black acculturation but of interculturalization – a conflicting, contradictory, and never quite finished synthesis" (p. xiii).

On one level, it was very difficult indeed, if not virtually impossible, for African-Jamaicans to totally escape the web of Christianity. However, there were in mid-nineteenth-century Jamaica, as there had always been, those who made a self-conscious and deliberate effort to do so; those who found neither present comfort and consolation nor inspiration and hope for the future in the religion of their owners and former owners or in the message presented by Baptists and Methodists, of whatever race. As Stewart persuasively suggests, this rejection of Protestant Christianity, in all its forms and varieties, and the retention of traditional cosmologies and practices, produced another form of interculturalization which in its own way was just as complex, and perhaps just as "conflicting" and "contradictory," as that between traditional and Christian faiths.

Stewart has produced a generally convincing and eminently readable analysis which adds significantly to our understanding of the multi-faceted transition from chattel to wage slavery in Jamaica. He is at his strongest when dealing with the institutional dimensions of organized religion, with church history. On balance, Stewart deals even-handedly with the main protagonists in his story. However, there are gaps and shortcomings in his discussion of African-Jamaican perspectives and experiences. For example, we might have been told far more about the basis of religious decision-making and religiously inspired behavior. Stewart remains largely silent on such critically important questions as the extent to which such decision-making and behavior were shaped by considerations that included birth-place, age and, more especially perhaps given current scholarly preoccupations, gender.

African-Jamaican women comprised a significant proportion of Baptist and Methodist church members but were denied any formal authority within their congregations. But what kinds of formal authority did they claim, and were they able to exercise, both inside and outside their churches? Were some of the "conflicts" and "contradictions" of which Stewart speaks gender-based? The author's failure to address these questions, which are generating an intense amount of scholarly attention, diminishes the overall value of his work. However, the fact remains that Stewart has greatly enhanced our understanding of the religious dimensions of Ja-

maica's passage from chattel to wage slavery. Even though some might disagree with his emphasis, and others will wish that he had explored certain aspects of his subject in more depth, this monograph is bound to be of enormous interest to all students of mid-nineteenth-century Jamaica.

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*Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960*. MICHAEL HAVINDEN & DAVID MEREDITH. New York: Routledge, 1993. xv + 420 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

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The Caribbean has been increasingly integrated into the wider world – economically, politically, and culturally – for 500 years. Integration took place primarily through colonization, as different parts of the Caribbean, and sometimes the same part at different times, became subordinate parts of imperial systems. *Colonialism and Development* helps us understand wider relations between the British Caribbean and other parts of this imperial system in its final century. This is an excellent study of the economic relations between Britain and its tropical colonies between 1850 and 1960, but it is flawed by the limitations of its perspective. As economic history, too narrowly defined, it fails to examine the social, political, and cultural factors that, embedded in the economic situation, contributed crucially to undermining the system of colonial domination.

Michael Havinden and David Meredith focus on the evolution of ideas in Britain about colonial development, and on specific achievements and failures of government development policies. Though in many cases formal colonial rule lasted less than a century, in the Caribbean it was generally much longer. This book does not consider the extent to which the experience of the old Caribbean plantation colonies influenced policies concerning the colonies acquired in the later nineteenth century. After

slavery was abolished throughout the British colonies in the 1830s, the chief problem for tropical plantation agriculture was how to obtain and control a cheap and dependent labor force. One of the social and cultural links between parts of the imperial system that is not discussed is the mass migration of Indian laborers, mostly indentured, to work on plantations in British Guiana, Ceylon, Fiji, Malaya, Mauritius, and Trinidad. This study says little about labor.

Joseph Chamberlain's goal (1895-1903) was to develop the colonies as if they were "a great estate," but even with the rapid growth of trade in the early twentieth century, most colonized people remained pitifully poor. World War I disrupted trade and increased the price of imports to the colonies, worsening their terms of trade and making people even poorer. As wages failed to keep up with prices, there were strikes and protests throughout the empire, for example, in Ceylon, Fiji, Malaya, Nigeria, and Trinidad. The British government, however, was chiefly concerned with finding how colonial economic development might contribute to solving Britain's problems. The re-establishment of imperial preferences reinforced the colonies' dependence on imports from Britain and on the export of a limited range of such staples as cocoa, tea, sugar, rubber, palm kernels and palm oil, thus making them even more vulnerable to the Great Depression.

After the prices of most colonial exports collapsed in the 1930s, the British government's policies were geared to ease the plight "at home," even by tightening constraints on the colonies. The Depression resulted in a social and political crisis in many colonies, but it was only after the largest of the West Indian labor rebellions in Jamaica in 1938 that the Colonial Office created a committee to propose reforms, and after the report of the West India Royal Commission into the rebellions that the Colonial Development and Welfare Act was passed in 1940. In the four years after its inception, 60 percent of the funds allocated by this Act went to the West Indies. However, "the 1940 Act did not really break any new ground," Havinden and Meredith point out. "Overall, 'Welfare' received more attention than 'Development'" (p. 223).

After World War II, the motive behind colonial development policies was again the economic crisis in Britain. Such striking failures as the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme resulted from the attempt to apply inappropriate technology on a large scale so as to increase colonial productivity to meet Britain's urgent needs. It was a failure of theory as well as practice, but the concept of export-led growth was always, for obvious reasons, central to colonial schemes. These patterns of colonial "un-development" left a legacy of chronic problems. Havinden and Meredith show that "colonialism and development were largely contradictory"

(p. 317), but do not examine what emerged from this contradiction: the resistance of the colonized whose labor rebellions sparked movements to overthrow colonial rule.

The absence of analysis of labor relations results in the loss of any sense of the social conflict that is inherent in colonial systems of domination. The brief mention of strikes and protests in the 1930s (pp. 196-97) does not do justice to the role of the colonized in overthrowing colonialism. The solution is not simply to find alternative sources to those of British officialdom, but to scour all sources for the voices of insurgents whose active resistance created possibilities for real development. Development, as the authors say, must entail structural change in colonial economies, but this also involves shifts in the distribution of power.

*La independencia de Cuba*. LUIS NAVARRO GARCÍA. Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992. 413 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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Luis Navarro García's *La independencia de Cuba* is the second volume in a Spanish collection of books devoted to the processes by which the countries of Latin America gained their independence from Spain. The title is somewhat misleading, since the book is essentially a wide ranging political history of Cuba during the nineteenth century. Political movements not related to Cuba's independence receive as much attention as the independence movements do.

The book is arranged in strict chronological order. It begins with events sparked by the Spanish political crisis of 1808-14 and their ramifications in Spain's colonial domains, and culminates with the Spanish-Cuban-North American War, Cuba's cession to the United States on January 1, 1899, and Cuba's independence under the restrictions of the Platt Amendment in 1902. Between these benchmark events, Navarro García traces the most salient political events, including the pro-independence conspiracies of the 1810s-1830s, the annexationist activities of the 1840s-1850s, and the independence struggles of the 1860s-1890s. Unfortunately, Navarro García does not do much in terms of explaining the transitions between these very different – sometimes diametrically opposed – political movements.



Why, for example, did annexationism emerge and disappear when it did? What explains, to give another example, the fact that the elitist, conservative tendencies of the early decades of the century came together, to some extent, with the more radical mass movements in the 1860s-1870s and to an even greater extent in the 1890s? A stronger introduction and a conclusion might have allowed the author to lay down some overarching theses that would have created a sense of progression among the many episodes he traces. As it stands, the book is a succession of moments in Cuba's political history, which seem to have no relation to one another.

At three different stages, Navarro García focuses on the study of three key political figures of Cuba's nineteenth century: Félix Varela, José Martí, and José Antonio Saco. Although his treatment of them is useful in illustrating the dominant political postures of their periods, it is neither innovative nor systematic. Only a few of these men's works appear to have been consulted and the bulk of the secondary literature on them has been left out.

There is, in fact, a very serious problem of insufficient documentation throughout the book. There is no archival research behind it, which might be excusable given that it is meant to be a synthetic work covering several related topics over a long period of time. What is inexcusable, however, is that the book rests on a flimsy and unsystematic bibliography. Navarro García appears to have consulted only a handful of published documentary collections and political histories, some of which are dated. Key secondary sources such as the works of Sergio Aguirre, Gerald Eugene Poyo, Robert L. Paquette, Louis A. Pérez, Jr., and others are conspicuously absent from the bibliography and the notes. There are several topics in the book that appear to rest on information from a single source.

Related to the bibliographical problem is the fact that Navarro García fails to sort out or even identify some of the key standing debates on nineteenth-century political history. A book of this synthetic nature would have been the perfect setting to provide some sense of the ongoing historiographical debates, such as those on the extent of the conspiracy of La Escalera, the intentions behind Narciso López's annexationism, and the composition and orientation of the forces behind the struggle of 1868-1878. Instead, Navarro García presents the "facts" – sometimes with the support of one or two sources – as if there were no debate.

In spite of all the above, *La independencia de Cuba* has some strengths worth noting. For example, it traces developments in Cuba within a global context, with attention to developments, causes, and repercussions in the broader Atlantic context, rather than in isolation as is sometimes the case. In the earlier chapters, readers get a good sense of how Cuba's struggles

for independence, or lack thereof, relate to events in the circum-Caribbean context. The book also establishes a useful link between events in Spain and Cuba, which are not treated as well in other books by non-Spanish authors.

Despite its many weaknesses, Navarro García's book provides a highly-readable, factually-accurate, single-volume reference on nineteenth-century Cuban political history.

*Miami Now!: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Social Change.* GUILLERMO J. GRENIER & ALEX STEPICK III (eds.). Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992. 219 pages. (Cloth US\$ 34.95, Paper US\$ 16.95)

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This collection of essays on immigration, ethnicity, and social change, on the urban dynamics of the city of Miami is indeed a welcome and timely addition to the literature on one of America's most interesting cities. Edited by anthropologist Alex Stepick III and sociologist Guillermo J. Grenier, its nine chapters cover issues involving the history of Miami as a city chartered in 1896, immigration from the Caribbean Basin, blacks in Miami, the plight of Haitians in Miami, Cubans in Miami, the politics of language, Cuban-American labor in Dade County, Metropolitan Miami ethnic politics, and the politics of the eighteenth congressional district in the election of U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

In the introductory chapter, Grenier and Stepick set the stage, describing the changes affecting the city from the days in 1896 when Miami was incorporated, soon after railroad tycoon Henry Flagler completed the railroad linking northern Florida and the rest of the East Coast of Florida, and ending up in Miami, then an unimportant city in South Florida but soon to enter a boom as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1896-98. Taking the history of Miami into the boom and bust economics of the first sixty years of the twentieth century, the editors argue that by the late 1980s, Miami's industrial and social profiles were no different from those of newer American cities, "in which the economy was led by services, wholesale trade, finance, insurance, and real estate" (p. 9). Then, denoting the important role post-1959 Cubans played in the last thirty-five years of

economic transformation of Miami, they set the stage for a study of Miami, which in just one generation has gone from an increasingly declining tourist and retirement heaven to the primordial American capital of the Caribbean, with proportionately more foreigners than any other American city of its size and importance.

In "Immigration from the Caribbean Basin," Anthony Maingot describes the essential issues that have made Miami today the final American destination for many Caribbean immigrants. Analyzing the structural aspects of migration from the Caribbean, Maingot describes the pull and push factors behind Caribbean emigration, concluding that "the movement of Caribbean people to the United States has been constant from the area as a whole, regardless of economic system, or political regime" (p. 27). His chapter, one of the best written and most fully documented in the book, should be staple introductory reading for discussions and debates about Caribbean migration into the United States.

"Blacks in Miami," by Marvin Dunn and Alex Stepick III, is both challenging and educating; it succinctly portrays the problems and disadvantages encountered by Americans of African descent in a city that has become accustomed to ignoring them and their needs. While Cubans have prospered economically and politically, black Miamians have grown to be the most frustrated residents of that city.

In "The Refugee Nobody Wants," Stepick tackles the Haitian migration into Miami over the last twenty years. His chapter examines the causes and consequences of Haitian migration to Miami, brilliantly analyzing U.S. Federal policy designed to diminish the flow. The reality of a diverse Haitian population in Greater Miami and the overall prejudices and racism encountered by most Haitians in that city, regardless of whether they are boat people or relatively well off, is also discussed.

In "Cuban Miami," sociologist Lisandro Pérez traces the large Cuban presence in the city, from the first year of Fidel Castro's regime in 1959 to the 1990s. Describing Miami's Cuban community as the truest example of an ethnic enclave, Pérez goes on to discuss the acculturation of Cubans to U.S. culture, in spite of the fact that Cubans, par excellence, have established a distinctive "exile" ideology that tends to separate them from the other ethnic groups of Greater Miami. Pérez also argues that Miami's Cuban community "is more heterogeneous with respect to its position on relations with Cuba that is frequently assumed" (p. 99), and that the younger generation of Cubans in the United States, especially those born in the United States after 1959, will probably leave aside the hostility and isolation toward Cuba that their parents and grandparents shared against the regime in the island. Pérez categorically believes that as the 1990s

unfold, Cuban Miami will see a basic restructuring of its community, with the re-establishment of normal transportation, communication, and commercial links between Miami and Havana, despite the anti-Castro rhetoric of Miami's older Cuban community.

In "The Politics of Language in Miami," Max Castro focuses on Spanish as a tool for both communication and political and ethnic identity for the different Spanish-speaking groups of Greater Miami. Castro argues that since 1963, when Dade County established the first and most effective bilingual program in a U.S. public school system, Miamians entered a period of enlightened assimilationism in which bilingualism and biculturalism became trademarks. He then discusses the approval in 1980 of the antibilingual referendum, offering reasons for this anti-Hispanic movement and the subsequent failure of Florida's English-only campaign. Castro's chapter should be staple reading for specialists interested in the role language plays as a viable political tool in an ethnic enclave. As Hispanics in Miami continue to play more important roles in both the economy and the politics of Dade County, English-only referendums have virtually no chance of being passed.

Guillermo Grenier's chapter, "The Cuban-American Labor Movement in Dade County," is interesting for a number of reasons. First, he challenges the myth that Cuban-Americans are not interested in labor issues because they are so preoccupied with the anti-Cuba issue. He shows that Cubans, in spite of their foreign policy orientation, are indeed also interested in domestic concerns affecting their daily lives in the United States – that they know how to use labor organizations effectively whenever available, and that they know how to make their elected officials (regardless of party affiliation) responsive to their ethnic and labor concerns. Grenier is of the opinion that the second generation of Cuban-Americans will use the labor movement as a vehicle for upward mobility while remaining able to maintain their ethnic identity. He also believes that through participation in an organized and effective labor movement, Cubans will effect their assimilation to the American culture and ideals.

In "The Reform Tradition and Ethnic Politics: Metropolitan Miami Confronts the 1990's," John Stack and Christopher Warren effectively demonstrate that in Dade County, ethnic politics are still alive and going strong, and that the proponents of the so-called reform model of American politics have found their defeat in Dade County. They also discuss the political disenfranchisement of Dade County's black community and the political ascendancy of its Hispanic candidates.

The last chapter of *Miami Now!* deals with the politics of the eighteenth congressional district of Florida, the district now represented by Republi-

can congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. It discusses the role that ethnic politics played in the election of the first Cuban-American in the U.S. House of Representatives and how effectively the Latino electorate of Dade County participated in this election.

*Miami Now!* is an outstanding collection of essays on Greater Miami and should be read by those specialists interested in America's urban centers containing large ethnic enclaves. All of the chapters in this volume are well documented, and the editors should be congratulated for having produced such a fine piece of scholarship. This reviewer hopes that within the next five years a revised edition will be produced, incorporating newer data on the different ethnic groups and the urban problems of one of America's most challenging and interesting metropolitan areas.

*The Fractured Blockade: West European-Cuban Relations during the Revolution.* ALISTAIR HENNESSY & GEORGE LAMBIE (eds.). London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1993. xv + 358 pp. (Paper £ 13.95)

*Cuba's Ties to a Changing World.* DONNA RICH KAPLOWITZ (ed.). Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1993. xii + 263 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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As the endgame between Cuba and the United States enters a crucial phase, both of the books reviewed here are particularly timely. The collection by Alistair Hennessy and George Lambie, which includes essays by a number of distinguished Cuba specialists, focuses on changes in Cuban-European relations, although the perplexing impasse in relations between Cuba and the United States is never far from the surface. In essence, the book argues that if most European countries largely ignored the U.S.-imposed blockade during the Cold War, today the blockade is seen as positively counter-productive by the European Union. The volume is divided into four sections covering, in turn, historical and intellectual aspects of Cuban-European relations, their economics, European case studies, and current developments. In addition to providing introductory and concluding chapters, the editors have contributed substantially to the collection; a masterful essay by Hennessy examines the different manner in which the

Cuban revolution was perceived in the United States and Europe, and Lambie offers three detailed case studies on the evolution of Cuban economic relations with Europe. The latter contribution is particularly valuable, pulling together much new material and showing how, from the early days of the revolution, commercial interests in each case overcame deep ideological differences with Britain under Macmillan, France under De Gaulle, and Spain under Franco. Antoni Kapcia's clear, incisive chapter on the ideological roots of the revolution provides a nice complement to Hennessy's initial essay.

The economic section consists of three chapters. There is an excellent essay on the international sugar market and Cuba's role within it by Gerry Hagelberg and Tony Hannah, both recognized experts in this field. Andrew Zimbalist, known for his reworking of Cuban national accounting data, examines macro-economic performance of the Cuban economy in the 1980s and argues that the *rectificación* campaign in 1986 was less of a step backwards than other authors, such as Jorge Domínguez and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, have claimed. The piece by José Luis Rodríguez is noteworthy for being the volume's only contribution by a Cuban academic.

On the critical side, some of the essays are uneven in quality and certain arguments are questionable, for example, the recurring theme that European trade, vital to the survival of the revolution in the 1960s, remains vital today. First, whatever the political importance to Cuba of importing British buses or exporting nickel to France in the 1960s, according to Cuban figures Western Europe's share in total trade before the revolution was less than 10 percent and did not rise much above this in the 1960s; by the late 1980s it had fallen to a mere 6 percent. Thus, Europe's contribution was not to replace the United States as a trading partner, but merely to carry on as a minor player. Second, as Gareth Jenkins observes with remarkable prescience in his contribution to the final section, despite the Toricelli amendment, it is only a matter of time before the United States lifts its embargo. Such a move would bring a flood of U.S. capital into Cuba, forcing out the weaker European and Asian firms. As with the Vietnamese embargo, one suspects that the function of European (and Japanese) capital in Cuba is to alert U.S. business to the cost of losing this important future market.

The collection by Donna Rich Kaplowitz, though thinner on Europe, covers the full spectrum of Cuba's international relations. The project is well thought out and the result is a thorough, rigorous, and uniformly readable book. Separate sections are devoted to the evolution of political and economic relations with Africa and Asia, with Europe, with Latin America and the Caribbean, and with North America. The editor's excellent introduction focuses on Cuba's pressing need to diversify its economic and

political ties following the demise of the CMEA. The chapters on China and Japan, by Damian J. Fernández and Kanako Yamaoka respectively, suggest that although strong trade ties exist with both countries, Japan is still amenable to U.S. pressure against increased trade while China cannot supply the preferential trade regime previously provided by the erstwhile USSR and its allies. Of particular interest is the parallel drawn between China's model of economic liberalization with political tightening and that of Cuba. Francine Marshall's chapter on Africa details the costly and contradictory nature of Cuban involvements in the 1980s and observes a severe weakening of ties in the 1990s; Africa's few self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes have disappeared, the record of "African socialism" has been undistinguished, and trade with the continent is now negligible. By contrast, as John Attfield shows, the Middle East is an important market for Cuban sugar and, potentially, a source of oil; moreover, Cuba's political stance has been consistent; contrary to popular myth, Castro opposed both Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the U.S.-led Gulf War. But the Middle-Eastern market is highly competitive and Cuba has been unable to diversify its trade beyond primary products. Implicit here, as in other essays, is one of the key paradoxes of Cuban development. Having developed a highly skilled work force and a sophisticated technological capability, why has Cuba remained incapable of switching to a pattern on industrial exports-led growth?

The three chapters on European relations – Wolf Grabendorff on the European Union, Gareth Jenkins on the United Kingdom, and Wayne Smith on the USSR/Russia – are particularly good value. Grabendorff provides a detailed breakdown of EU trade and aid with Cuba in the 1980s; at the same time, he concludes rather pessimistically that unless significant political change occurs in Cuba, economic relations with the European Union – already hampered by Cuba's debt arrears – will worsen. Jenkins, the only author to have contributed a chapter to both books reviewed here, has produced a richly detailed, highly readable piece on the United Kingdom, though he concludes, like Grabendorff, that the future of trade with Europe ultimately depends on Washington. But the best chapter in this section is by Wayne Smith, who offers an excellent summery account of Castro's awkward relationship with the USSR over three decades and ends by raising a fundamental question implicit in both these books: why, now that "Communist Cuba" is no longer a threat to its interests, has the United States raised tensions with Cuba to a degree not seen since the early 1960s?

The two final sections contain some very good essays: by John Walton Cotman on relations with the CARICOM states, by Luiz L. Vasconcelos

on Brazil, by Carl Migdail on relations with Mexico and the United States, and by Richard V. Gorham on Cuba and Canada. Michael Erisman's piece on Central American-Cuban relations is particularly noteworthy here, as is the concluding essay by Michael D. Kaplowitz and Donna R. Kaplowitz, which estimates the opportunity cost of the embargo to the United States to be on the order of US\$ 2-3 billion per annum in trade foregone. It would appear to this reviewer that if Clinton wins a second term of office, a more confident administration might finally adopt a policy which serves both U.S. and Cuban interests in promoting a stable transition towards a market economy.

These two serious, scholarly collections complement each other nicely and will be important additions to the libraries of Cuba specialists, Latin Americanists, and the general reader.

*The Politics of the Caribbean Basin Sugar Trade.* SCOTT B. MACDONALD & GEORGES A. FAURIOL (eds.). New York: Praeger, 1991. vii + 164 pp. (Cloth US\$ 47.95)

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Books on current affairs risk being overtaken by events and depreciating faster than a motorcar, unless soundly constructed. A study of the Caribbean sugar situation up to 1989 could still be a collector's piece – though finished before the slump of the Cuban economy following the collapse of its Soviet and Comecon props, the GATT Uruguay Round accord, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and pertinent changes in U.S. sugar legislation – provided it was a thorough source of data, synthesized the experience, and shed light on the underlying secular trends. Indeed, the problem primarily addressed here – the diminished market for Caribbean sugar in the United States – is still with us. Right from the drawing board, however, this particular vehicle was destined to be more flivver than limousine.

A skimpy and unmethodical introduction by the editors leads into eight chapters on the regulation of the U.S. sugar market, the view from Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba's sugar economy, the Dominican Republic, the Commonwealth Caribbean, Central America, Haiti and Panama,



and the use of sugarcane-derived ethanol as a motor fuel. Most of the ten authors of the volume belong to the research and policy analysis community in Washington DC; only two or three are sugar specialists, a circumstance that may explain several inaccuracies and the failure to use standard primary sources in some parts. A lack of editorial control is evidenced by the uneven length and quality of the chapters and the inelegance of much of the writing, as well as by some mislabeled figures, misnumbered footnotes, and similar nonsense. In a relatively slim treatment of a large and complex subject, considerable space is occupied by matters not obviously related to sugar politics, trade, or other; at least, no connection is established. Particularly questionable is the inclusion of the chapter on ethanol by a lecturer in Latin American studies trained in political science. Yet the policy and institutional framework needed to allow the use of ethanol as motor fuel is barely mentioned, and the argument rests not on state-of-the-art technology, but on the claims made by promoters of processes either "highly unorthodox" or at a precommercial stage, which the writer is patently unqualified to judge.

The book focuses mainly on the U.S.-Caribbean relationship which MacDonald and Fauriol sum up as having been "defined by protectionism, government subsidies for inefficient elements in the sugar industry, as well as by corruption and mismanagement" (p. 2). They conclude that "the sugar trade in the 1980s was driven, not by the laws of supply and demand, but by political agendas advanced by various groups in each state sector" (p. 2).

In essence, elevated support prices for sugar in the United States stimulated domestic production of sugar and, even more, of high fructose corn syrup, a cheaper alternative sweetener that came to be widely adopted in the food and beverage industries. Besides its costs to U.S. consumers and taxpayers, features built into the system caused a drastic reduction of sugar imports. While foreign quota suppliers shared the benefit of high protected prices, their access to the U.S. market shrank; the Dominican Republic, the largest quota holder, for instance, has seen its entitlement cut by more than half since 1982-83. Current rules provide for the imposition of so-called marketing allotments, restraining domestic sugar producers, when estimated imports requirements fall below 1.25 million short tons (1,134,00 tonnes) barely more than a quarter of average net annual U.S. sugar imports in the second half of the 1970s.

It is ironic, but not news, that the country foremost in extolling the virtues of free trade practices blatant protectionism, as the book points out, and that the Caribbean Basin Initiative was followed by cuts in Caribbean sugar quotas. Perhaps this needs to be said time and again, though it is

difficult to imagine a policy or opinion maker concerned with any of the issues involved who is unaware of the incompatibilities, incongruities, and distortions thrown up by the U.S. sugar program, in operation in one form or another and debated during the best part of sixty years. There are scattered hints why it has proved such a hard habit to kick (though kicked it was for a while in the 1970s), but no systematic balance of the factors – economic and political – by which it survived and may eventually end. The existence of a protectionist sweetener regime in the European Union is noted without analysis and comparison. How Caribbean sugar exporters would fare in a free-market U.S. environment with greater access but lower prices is not explored; arguably, their particular quarrel is less with protectionism as such than with the way it has been orchestrated in this case.

At the end of most of the chapters, a limp conclusion, if not muddy verbiage, leaves the reader floundering. But, then, it is not clear who this book was meant for anyway.

*Banana Fallout: Class, Color, and Culture among West Indians in Costa Rica.* TREVOR W. PURCELL. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies, 1993. xxi + 198 pp. (Paper US\$ 15.95)

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A memorable travel-writing passage comes from Paul Theroux's *The Old Patagonian Express*. While descending the tropical escarpment from San José to Limón, Theroux observed a fellow train passenger, an Afro-Costa Rican mother who was attempting to control her boisterous children with occasional warnings of "*Cuidado!*" But when one little boy leaned out dangerously through the window, she exclaimed "Take yo haid out de winda!"

In his fine study of the West Indian community of eastern Costa Rica, Trevor Purcell devotes a chapter to this linguistic ambivalence. When the first sizeable wave of black West Indians came to Costa Rica for railroad work and banana labor late in the nineteenth century, English was a favored language for workers whose economic well-being depended on how well they communicated with their white, English-speaking bosses. But as the country's eastern lowlands and its people have gradually

become assimilated into the rest of Costa Rica, Spanish has become "the language of power" (pp. 115-17). Not surprisingly, individual black Costa Ricans often continue to master a combination of formal English, West Indian Creole, and Spanish to fit particular sociolinguistic settings.

Purcell's book outlines the historical background of this "secondary migration" within the African diaspora of West Indians to Central America. But his focus is on the more current setting. Purcell, a native of Jamaica and an avowedly sympathetic and involved observer, resided in several small communities in eastern Costa Rica for a total of eighteen months in the late 1970s in order to observe daily life and collect field data. He designed his resulting study to answer three principal questions that "shed light on class, color, culture, and migrant status ... in the creation of inequality and dependency." Under what specific conditions are racial and cultural identities formed? How do these identities function and change? And, ... how does this process affect the ability of the subjects ... to determine their own life conditions?" (pp. 14-15).

These are, of course, very broad and overlapping categories, and they indicate the flavor of Purcell's study rather than delineating precise hypotheses. They nonetheless shape his study. His ten chapters are arranged chronologically and range from historical analysis, such as Chapter 2 ("From Plantation Colony to National Enclave: Race and Inequality"), to recent social surveys, such as Chapter 8 ("Color as Socioeconomic Value"). Throughout, Purcell suggests a concern about the interrelationships between individual actors and social structure, a perspective that leads to a number of provocative statements – like, "Blacks in the Americas have never been allowed the luxury of ignoring the color of their skin" (p. 8).

This perspective also permits Purcell to compare his own findings with those derived by others who have dealt with better-known Afro-Caribbean cultures. For example, in the most detailed ethnographic information he presents, he arrays detailed kinship data from more than 1000 households among five different communities in the Limón district (pp. 142-45). He then suggests a rough comparison between his work and Hyman Rodman's findings from Trinidad of twenty years ago. Elsewhere, Purcell comments on his findings in light of the works of others such as Lloyd Braithwaite, Nancie González, M.G. Smith, R.T. Smith, and Peter Wilson. Purcell's case-studies however, outshine his ethnographic data. His descriptions of life and tensions within two related families (pp. 147-54) sparkle with insights; off-hand discussions elsewhere in the book that describe his Costa Rican field experiences are similarly engaging.

Purcell seems pessimistic about the future for the Afro-Costa Rican community of the eastern coastal lowlands. Although this group – or, more

specifically, particular members of the group – have achieved notable success within the larger Costa Rican society, overall black assimilation has meant “ideologically ‘socializing and incorporating’ Blacks into the dominant social sector” (p. 165). More immediately, the withdrawal of banana plantation activities in the Limón area, combined with a recent earthquake there, have created a dismal local economic situation. Purcell is not optimistic that Costa Rican ideology and politics are so heavily influenced by the white-dominated United States because “[f]or Blacks in white-dominated societies, the situation is bleaker than for those in Caribbean countries where Blacks predominate” (p. 166).

An unhelpful editorial decision leads to stylistic inconsistencies in Purcell’s study. All designations of ethnic groups begin with capital letters, e.g., Black, Hispanic, Native American, except for whites, always beginning with a small “w.” Contentiousness aside, this decision inevitably leads to inconsistencies. In the last statement of his book, Purcell wonders “whether whites will cease to create new and ever more subtle barriers to ... non-whites” (p. 166). Shouldn’t they be Non-whites? Purcell’s rejoinder might be that inequalities – about which he has written very well – can cut many different ways.

*Double Passage: The Lives of Caribbean Migrants Abroad and Back Home.* GEORGE GMECH. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992. viii + 335 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00, Paper US\$ 16.95)

*A Passage to England: Barbadian Londoners Speak of Home.* JOHN WESTERN. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992. xxii + 309 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95, Paper US\$ 17.95)

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George Gmelch, an anthropologist, and John Western, a geographer, consider biographies of Caribbean migration. The methods are different – one the contained form of separate first-person narratives of fourteen Barbadian migrants who have returned to the island, the other, a more discursive ethnography drawn from a set of open-ended conversations and structured interviews with the members of about fifteen Barbadian

families living in England. Both authors, however, show to strong effect the experiential dimensions of the geopolitical movement of Caribbean folk from island to metropole and back. The best moments come when, in the subtle details of immigrants' narration of their lives, the reader gains insight into the intersection of personal experience and temperament with the broader sweep of history, economy, and politics.

I was engaged by these works. They spoke to me in more than academic fashion because when I read them I had just helped my mother, in her early seventies, move back to Jamaica after living twenty-five years in the United States. She left her children and grandchildren behind and took, among other things, furniture, food, books, light fixtures, carpeting, refrigerator, paint, plastic bags, clothes hangers, dishes, towels, and toilet paper. The re-transfer of the goods and holdings of a life was awesome in the detail and completeness of its inventory. By contrast, as a family we barely expressed the raw mix of excitement, happiness, anger, fear, and confusion that struck us as we contemplated the 'permanent' departure of our mother to a 'home' that had receded in its ability to hold her children's allegiances and aspirations.

The narratives in these two works run thick with the procession of everyday routines. People speak of finding work, making friends, having children, re-uniting families, keeping warm, getting educated, establishing property ownership. They reflect, too, on the deprecations of anti-immigrant and anti-black sentiments flung across the backyard fence or manifested in violent attacks on the street. But above all, it is the ambiguities of place and identity, of final and continuous passages between home and abroad that form the bedrock on which Barbadians construct narratives and give meaning to their experiences of immigration and return.

One couple in Gmelch's book, for example, remigrate from Canada, but then, buffeted by the burglary of their small business venture, and by the resentment of neighbors, remain conflicted about the permanence of their decision. The husband, Siebert, gets a Canadian passport just in case, and his wife wonders if she "had done the right thing, leaving my work and all up there ... Maybe I should have told Siebert to go home by himself and see if he really wanted to be there" (p. 219). A similar struggle with the rivalries of "homes" confronted the Barbadians in London who were interviewed by Western. Asked where they considered home, the greater number, most of whom had lived in England for more than three decades, identified Barbados, but then they felt compelled to qualify their answer with versions of: "it depends on the context." Western writes that for these individuals, whether or not they expected to remigrate, "there is London and there is Barbados, and the one isn't a constituent of the larger

other but rather a contender with it" (p. 257).

The children of the migrant generation express no such concerns about the ambiguity of home. They firmly identify themselves first as Londoners, using the lens of racial identity to establish their sense of difference or inclusion into the greater polity. This cross-generational rupture is one that Western explores in a masterly manner. He is able to do this because he talked to members of the migrant generation as well as to their children. Tensions arise between husbands and wives with divergent feelings about if and when to resettle in Barbados, and adult children twist the knife by raising the specter of abandonment and disruption. If their parents feel drawn to the romance of return, then their children are equally anxious about becoming bereft of family ties/histories in the Old World, as they negotiate its class and racial realities.

To his credit, while not neglecting the commonalties with other immigrant groups from the Caribbean, Western attends to the specific texture of these issues for Barbadians in England who had assumed a cultural kinship with their English counterparts and a greater stake than other West Indians in the idea of belonging to Britain. Indeed most of the men interviewed had been actively recruited – in the 1950s and 1960s – to work for British Railways and London Transport as drivers, conductors, and maintenance workers. Having been wooed, their experience of English racial hostility contributed to a heightened sense of being strangers abroad. Yet as his interviewees point out, this sense of difference did not lead them to create Barbadian communities in London. They desired, instead, the "greenery" of suburbia. With a bit of irony a second-generation Barbadian notes that "I don't know where you could find a group of ten Barbadians together" (p. 193).

Gmelch and Western work with similar subject matter, share a perspective on the multiple meanings of "home" offered by their interviewees, and exhibit a similar sense of respect for the private lives made public through their mediation, but the books diverge in the uses to which the biographical form is put. Gmelch prefers a tidy approach, separating the authorial voice in early background chapters and a final wrap-up analysis and saving the heart of the text for the oral histories. Each life gets a chapter preceded by a sometimes too brief description of the speaker set off in italics. Even in the case of the two married couples, first the husband's tale is presented and then the wife's.

Gmelch taped his interviews and then edited them in the first-person, removing the pertinent questions that shaped the direction of the narratives. Granted there may be advantages to this approach, but it has two major shortcomings. First, individual stories threaten to break their tether

from the broader analysis of the meanings of migration and return-migration as an experiential phenomenon for these Barbadians. Readers are left to make their own connections among the narratives. As a remedy I found myself flipping back and forth between the individual life histories and the final three chapters, collectively titled "Interpretation." At times, I felt a desperate need for the author's intervention *in situ*. For example, his analysis of the returnees' impact on the politics and culture of their island society was especially useful, but tucked away in a concluding chapter.

A second shortcoming of this approach is that each narrative seems almost to fit a template in which the chronology moves from arrival overseas to return home in lockstep fashion. The ragged edges get smoothed out. Gmelch refers to this effect, but argues that this is in the nature of retrospective narratives. Perhaps so, but one also wonders about the influence of the kinds of questions asked by the author as well as the nature of the editing process undertaken during transformation from taped interview to finished chapter. Though he alludes to some of the problematics of the form he adopts for his book, he seems rather reluctant to 'mess' with it.

Western's strategy is rather more satisfying on this account. He arranges his chapters topically, interweaving the narratives, explicating the dominant and minor themes and pointing out the internal contradictions within and across people's responses to specific questions. Helpful in this regard is the alphabetical "cast of characters" which prefaces the work – "Orville Alleyne, administrator in a London bus garage, Pauline, his wife, psychiatric nurse" and so forth (p. xxi). The use of this theatrical device is a wonderful touch, not only providing a guide for readers but also alluding to the complex drama formed by the lives of these ordinary folk making meaning and crafting ties to people and places in their adopted home. Another useful addition is an appendix containing the interview questions. Some might find Western's reflexivity annoying at times as he connects his own autobiography of displacement to that of his Barbadian subjects. I half-expected to see the author's name take its place in the cast of characters. But the effort is ultimately successful in conveying to readers a genuine give and take between the researcher and his informants.

I recommend these two works highly. Gmelch's work may be the more suited to a popular audience. Together they would be valuable additions to any undergraduate or graduate course syllabus. Western's book, in particular, should be compulsory reading for scholars not only of the Caribbean, but of immigration studies in general. Lest I forget, the black and white photographs were a wonderful treat, a *lagniappe* in the fine tradition of pan-Caribbean culture.<sup>1</sup>

#### NOTE

1. *Lagniappe* is a French Caribbean term used to refer to a small portion of food added to one's serving, or to the extra piece of goods or weight that a seller adds to her favorite customer's purchase – a sweetening, so to speak. In the English Caribbean this is called a *bratah*.

*Turtle Bogue: Afro-Caribbean Life and Culture in a Costa Rican Village.* HARRY G. LEFEVER. Cranbury NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1992. 249 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.50)

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*Turtle Bogue* is the name used by locals of this community to refer to their village; outsiders call it Tortuguero. Located on Costa Rica's Atlantic coast, some fifty miles north of Puerto Limón, it sits on the northern end of a strip of land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Limón Canal, at the mouth of Rio Tortuguero. The shoreline around the village provides a nesting ground for four highly desired species of turtles: the green turtle, prized for its meat and eggs; the hawksbill, prized for its shell, known commercially as "tortoise shell"; the leatherback, sought less for its meat than for its large eggs; and the largest but most rarely seen, the loggerhead. It was the presence of turtles, a prized food to the indigenous people of the region long before it became commercial in the early to mid-twentieth century, that attracted the first settlers to Tortuguero. Turtle hunting was a prime activity along the coast, and the catalyst for the founding of at least one other village, Cahuita, some seventy miles to the south.

Tortuguero began in the 1930s, when Walton Martinez, who had plied the coast as a young boat operator for several years, decided to move his family away from the island of San Andrés. San Andrés was populated mainly by blacks from Jamaica and, in a common pattern, his move set a precedent for later settlers from the same area.

Today, the 150 or so residents of Tortuguero represent a mosaic of national origins; there are people whose ancestors came from Jamaica, San Andrés, Grand Cayman, Providencia, and Bluefields (Nicaragua). Most were part of a secondary diaspora, a movement of labor generated by the growth of global capitalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth cen-



turies, and through which people of African descent were transferred from various Caribbean colonial territories to the western Caribbean. This group, like the Black Caribs whom the British earlier transferred from the eastern Caribbean to the Honduran coast, dispersed along the Atlantic coast, and some of their descendants ended up in Tortuguero.

Tortuguero was settled on the sustenance provided by turtles but, like the town of Limón and other villages to the south, it soon became a company town. The mid-twentieth century was a time of foreign corporate ferment in Costa Rica. The United Fruit Company, for example, built much of the country's infrastructure, and gradually came to dominate much of its economy. At the same time, other companies, both foreign and local, moved into the region. Tortuguero had not only ample supplies of turtle, but also vast quantities of prized hardwood and good banana land. It was in this context that the Atlantic Trading Company, launched by a Costa Rican, moved into Tortuguero to exploit lumber and cultivate bananas. The contemporary town of Tortuguero grew and matured in response to the needs of the Atlantic Trading Company.

Like its more powerful cousin, the United Fruit Company, the Atlantic Trading Company procured most of its workers' material needs, including manufactured goods sold through the company commissary outlet (p. 100). Consequently, it produced a "consumer" in place of a "subsistence" village and, in turn, a culture of relative dependency. Like the United Fruit Company, the Atlantic Trading Company was later to pack up and depart when the economic winds blew cold. And like the residents of towns formed by the United Fruit Company, Turtle Bogue residents were left in a cash economy with the source of cash removed. As the author points out, they moved from being proletariat to being peasant (p. 125). Today, however, that process is being reversed; Turtle Bogue is facing the future that comes with globalization of "Western" culture and economy. The telephone came in 1972, and electricity in 1986; now there is increasing tourism, and the promise of a road to complement its accessibility by water and air.

Lefever has written a warm and sensitive ethnohistory about a people and a place that enchanted him. His sensitivity and respect for Tortuguerans are reflected in his methodology: much of his material is presented as translated quotes of his collaborative informers. He rightly recognizes, however, that this method poses a problem. Although Tortuguerans speak Spanish and an English-based Creole, the book's publisher and audience are English-speaking. Many of the nuances of meaning so essential to cultural interpretation are lost in translation. A few terms are explained in the notes, but more extensive usage of local terminology, accompanied by

an appropriate glossary, would have better served future researchers.

The central thesis of the book, developed over fifteen chapters and a conclusion, is a sociological statement on the nature of creole dynamism. The author argues that although such cultures are structured on the foundation of past traditions, they are essentially dynamic and emergent. Drawing on Herskovits (1958) and Mintz and Price (1992), Lefever argues convincingly that African American culture was not transferred from Africa but is a creative product of the circumstance of colonial contact (pp. 86-87). He then argues, again following Mintz and Price and bolstered by Geertz (1957), that to understand the process of creolization one needs to distinguish between culture and society (i.e. social structure): culture being the fabric of meaning whereby human beings interpret their experience, and social structure referring to the alignment of statuses and their accompanying roles (p. 91). For analytic purposes the distinctions are useful, but the concepts then need to be re-integrated in order to avoid the misconception that culture and society are separable in the real world. Lefever does not quite achieve that re-integration. Instead there are empirical descriptions of everyday roles and statuses, alongside descriptions of cultural practices and beliefs (religious practices, funeral customs, story-telling, etc.) "Culture" and "society," therefore, serve more as signposts for what the ethnographer is to describe than as explanatory devices that enlighten our understanding of the process of creolization.

Chapter 14, which is intended as an analysis of how culture and social structure function in the creation of ethnic identity, illustrates the less than adequate application of these concepts. Following chapters describing education, religion, folk culture, farming, fishing, eating, and drinking, it gives a history of factors that mold the identity of Tortuguero residents. Two sets of events are highlighted: the visit of Marcus Garvey and the subsequent formation of the United Negro Improvement Association; and the role of West Indian immigrants in Costa Rica's civil war of 1948, which paved the way for their incorporation into Costa Rican society. In laying out these events, Lefever paints a picture of people of color struggling to adjust to a society which conveniently exploits their labor, treats them as cultural inferiors and, under the ideology of racial democracy, denies the existence of racism. They must therefore redefine themselves in negotiating a social and racial structure which is enshrouded in ambiguity. Unfortunately, this ambiguity – so defining of the lives of blacks in Latin America – is never addressed in its own right. Instead, W.E.B. DuBois's oft-quoted statement that African Americans necessarily developed dual consciousness is used to inform the reader that people of Tortuguero, too, have a dual consciousness: they are *melcocha* (Spanish for taffy, a candy

made of a mixture of ingredients) (p. 83), and in the words of a young Limonese priest: "We are neither *chicha* [a liquor drink] nor *lemonade*" (p. 218). These events and pronouncements are not interpreted for the reader against the fabric of a local worldview that emerges out of their social and material reality. Indeed, nowhere is there a coherent interpretive understanding of the culture outside of the empirical descriptions and interviewee statements. Culture therefore is never reintegrated with social structure and then interpreted as a coherent text.

If the ethnographic objective is to portray whole life/society, then we should be careful not to describe humans acting out their structural roles and statuses without an understanding of the culture that informs those actions and are in turn textured by them. The case of Cahuita illustrates the point. A coastal village approximately seventy miles south of Turtle Bogue, Cahuita was settled under circumstances similar to those in Tortuguero, attracting a group of independent small farmers, entrepreneurs, and fishermen, most of whom came to rely on cacao farming. Unlike most other black communities on the coast, and like Tortuguero, life in this relatively prosperous village was never dominated by the United Fruit Company. Partly as a result of this, Cahuitans developed a culture in which independence is a strong motif, reflected in their sense of identity vis-à-vis Costa Rica as a nation as well as the rest of the black community in Costa Rica. It would have been instructive to know how (if at all), in spite of the role of the smaller and less coercive Atlantic Trading Company, the element of assertive independence featured in Tortugueroan identity.

Lefever's focus on the creolization process is commendably in line with much of the recent scholarship treating the evolution of Caribbean and circum-Caribbean peoples. And although the relatively disintegrative and overly empirical way in which process is treated detracts somewhat from the cultural coherence and depth of the ethnographic reality, the book is an important, and indeed pioneering, contribution to the ethnographic record of the secondary diaspora in the circum-Caribbean region.

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*Becoming West Indian: Culture, Self, and Nation in St. Vincent.* VIRGINIA HEYER YOUNG. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. x + 229 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.00)

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Virginia Young tries to establish a connection between Vincentians' growing concern with their cultural identity and the coherent, class-spanning culture she perceived in her village fieldwork. She argues that national identity in St. Vincent is not merely an invention of the intellectual elite, but rather grows out of the historically-based creole culture she describes. "This book seeks the connection between ... the nation and the ethnography" (p. 1). The result is not entirely convincing.

The first two chapters sketch a history of St. Vincent from colonization through the politics of the post-independence era, as Young tries to define the historical foundation of present-day Vincentian culture. She argues for the importance of conflicting self-images – as slaves, and as members of British colonial society – to the development of creole identity. The third chapter is a selective ethnography of the village where she did her fieldwork. Here Young makes her claim for a systematic domestic culture which she sees as the heart of national culture. The fourth chapter focuses on symbols that Vincentians see as representative of their national culture and attempts to show the roots of these national displays in village life. In the final chapter, Young ruminates on the idea of national identity and tries to reconnect the disparate elements of the book.

The book offers an insightful model of the way personal identity might intersect with history, culture, and national identity. Creole culture continually emerges from the ongoing resolution of a historical conflict of identity. This culture produces strong persons who maintain their dignity in this conflict by identifying with a larger entity, the nation. The individuality that emerges from this cultural context is important to the grass-roots viability of national identity. "Persons can win out over a history of treatment as non-persons. National unifying factors reside in values and concepts of the nature of the person" (p. 193). Unfortunately, the book is beset by a number of problems of credibility in the presentation of evidence.

First, Young does not always clearly distinguish between historical fact, ideology, and her own conjectures. The history she presents is an effort to show early evidence of current cultural patterns, but she is also concerned

to show "how Vincentians think about their history" (p. 4). Her own conjectures are interwoven with the rhetoric of a Vincentian history textbook until the awkward writing makes them impossible to distinguish. Second, Young's over-commitment to the theory of an integrated, stratified society (as opposed to a plural society) leads her to make highly questionable assertions about how Vincentians have viewed themselves with respect to British society. In exploring why more slaves did not join the Black Caribs to fight the British in the eighteenth-century war, for example, she says, "slave status was a necessary condition to membership in British society ... To remain part of the British colonial society, the slaves accepted their status and helped defeat the Maroons" (p. 19). She presents virtually no evidence to support this provocative statement, and a fair amount that does not support it. Third, she is so convinced that "rural-based culture is pervasive and coherent enough to have been a principal component of the national culture" (p. 8) that she feels justified in ignoring the lifeways of urban and elite Vincentians, and their influence on national ideologies. Fourth, her description of the contemporary village is thin and fragmented. To her credit, she is honest about the nature of her rapport with her informants, and the kinds of methodological adjustments she had to make (pp. 112, 121), but the reader remains uneasy about some of her findings.

Finally, the ethnography could be an opportunity to show how villagers talk about issues of history and identity, or at least how national concerns are reflected in local attitudes. Instead, the reader must take on faith that "[t]he themes of a slave origin and respect for the institutions of government are central to Vincentian worldviews" (p. 19), or that "government ... is the focus of an identity outside the self" (p. 81). In a study so centered on ideologies of identity, one might expect the subjects to have more voice.

The difficulty of weaving together the multiple complex issues in this book into a coherent whole is all too apparent. The organization is awkward, and the argument is often too diffuse to hold the readers' interest. In the end, Young's analysis rests on a number of vague connections – between past and present culture, between village and national culture, between national display and everyday life, and between personal and national identity – which require more thorough research and more explicit elaboration than she provides.

*From Kingston to Kenya: The Making of a Pan-Africanist Lawyer.*  
DUDLEY J. THOMPSON with MARGARET CEZAI THOMPSON. Dover MA:  
The Majority Press, 1993. xii + 144 pp. (Paper US\$ 10.95)

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The fifty-year period after World War II was the era of the militant phase of the decolonization process in Africa and the Caribbean. From the militant positive action campaign of the Convention People's Party in Ghana to the armed struggles of the African Liberation Process, Africans opposed external domination. This phase culminated with the victory of Nelson Mandela as the president of South Africa. It also saw the exhaustion of the nationalist ideas which had spearheaded the intellectual thrust behind this decolonization process. The defeat of Hastings Banda in Malawi in 1994 exposed the fact that the ideas of nation building based on the strong individual had been exhausted.

*From Kingston to Kenya* is a celebration of the life and ideas of one of the main personalities in this period. It provides a window into the institutions and ideas that shaped Pan Africanism from above and dominated the Pan African ideas of the Organization of African Unity. This book examines the life of Dudley Thompson, formerly a minister of foreign affairs in the government of Michael Manley, and at present the ambassador of Jamaica to Nigeria. As Rapporteur General, he is also among the twelve eminent persons on the board of the Reparations Campaign spearheaded by Chief Abiola of Nigeria.

The book is based on the recollections of a participant in the fifth Pan African Congress just before he was demobilized from the British Armed Forces in 1945. Written with the assistance of his daughter Margaret Cezair Thompson, there are pictures of Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore, and Ras Makonnen with the author. These were some of the leading figures of the 1945 conference which called for positive action and for independence in Africa and the Caribbean. There are also pictures of the author with international leaders such as Haile Selassie, Fidel Castro, and Henry Kissinger.

The book contains nine chapters, arranged in chronological order, and an epilogue. It stresses the importance of the modernizer in the process of institution building and minimizes the role of the producing masses. This theoretical orientation comes out clearly and is significant since the author

did not use the epilogue to interrogate the strength and weaknesses of the influence of Jomo Kenyatta in the political culture of Kenya. This is notable since the legacy of Kenyatta has been that of anti-democratic politics and the abuse of human rights. Arap Moi, the present president of Kenya, has achieved international notoriety with respect to authoritarianism and this is an aspect of the period which is glossed over in this book. What were the conditions of Kenyatta's career which could have left this legacy?

The first chapter, which provides background on the conditions of rural Jamaica where those with a small plot of land had struggled to survive in the period of the capitalist depression of the 1930s, exposes some of the idealism of Jamaicans with respect to rural life. Dudley Thompson came from a family of literate school teachers who shepherded his career as a teacher through Mico Teacher Training College and imbued in him a love for British values which led him to volunteer in the armed forces during World War II. There is more information on his service in the RAF than on the seminal feature of Jamaican history, the 1938 people's revolt against colonialism.

Despite having grown up in Jamaica in the height of militant Garveyism, the author gives no indication that he was exposed to these ideas as a youth. The cultural reference points were those elements of the aspiring middle class who were ambivalent about their relationship to the working poor. The 1938 rebellion forced this stratum to take sides. Since they too were oppressed by the colonial system they offered themselves up as mediators between the colonial overlords and the African poor. This was the basis of the nationalism of the Jamaican middle class. Norman Manley was the intellectual leader of this group of social democrats and Thompson paid tribute to his influence in his choice of career.

In the aftermath of the rebellion of the poor, Britain sought to train a stratum of Africans in Jamaica and its other colonies to inherit the colonial apparatus. Thompson received a Rhodes Scholarship in this period. His concerns, as manifested in his participation in militant Pan African fora, demonstrate that he did not take the same path as other Rhodes scholars from the Caribbean such as Eric Williams.

The book reveals the opposition of the ex-soldiers who had fought for democracy in Europe but went home to find that colonial plunder was not very different from fascism. This inspired the meeting of the Fifth Pan African Congress. While in the United Kingdom, Thompson met the distinguished leaders of the Pan African movement. It was the intellectual influence of George Padmore and those who had formed the International African Service Bureau that propelled Thompson's interest in Africa and

led him to work in Moshi, Tanzania, after he graduated from Oxford and finished his training as a lawyer.

Readers are offered an opportunity to grasp the hive of anti-colonial activity which was taking place in the United Kingdom after World War II. Thompson was a student leader in the West Indian Students Union. This was the parallel organization of the West African Student Union (WASU). There have been many studies to expose the influence of these organizations on the political thinking of post-independence leaders in the English-speaking Caribbean and West Africa. The book could have explored the limits of a movement which was male centered since most, if not all, of the leaders of the various movements were men.

Thompson immersed himself in the nationalist circles of Tanganyika at the time. As one of the few African-trained lawyers, his expertise was in demand by chiefs and commoners who opposed the British monopoly over the marketing of cash crops. Tanganyika was a UN trustee territory. The book captures the heightened political activities of the anti-colonial movement in East Africa. Because Moshi is on the border with Kenya, there were close linkages between the anti-colonial struggles in Kenya and Tanganyika. The book offers an opportunity for the reader to examine the efforts made for the legal defense of Kenyatta as the leader of the Kenya African National Union. While this information is important, Thompson's emphasis on the legal issues downplays the centrality of the war of the Land and Freedom Army in the decolonization process in Kenya. In a short essay, Walter Rodney once wrote about the impact of the Mau Mau in Tanganyika territory. Thompson's book shows that while he was in Moshi he was unaware of this impact.

Thompson threw all his energy into the legal battles aimed at exposing the British in Kenya. He assisted in determining the whereabouts of Kenyatta after the British army had abducted him during the State of Emergency. Had he read works such as that of Anthony Clayton, he would have been able to offer more detailed analysis of the atrocities of the State of Emergency. The chapter on Kapenguria recounts the efforts made to assemble a legal team to defend Jomo Kenyatta.

The dialectic of the unity of opposites meant that the stress placed on the colonial structures and the struggles against them led to the reinforcement of these institutions. The law courts were one terrain of struggle but the trade unionists and the peasants activated another. Because Thompson was involved in the legal terrain of the anti-colonial struggle, his book stresses the legal aspects of the opposition to colonialism. This point becomes important since those who struggled on other fronts did not reap the fruits of independence. With hindsight it is now possible to



examine more critically the career of Jomo Kenyatta and the forms of nationalism of his party. This is the major weakness of the book. Written in the 1980s when the consequences of anti-democratic policies were clear, it would have been useful for the author to rise above the kind of celebration of the trial of Kenyatta which would have had a different impact in the 1970s. It is true that each generation writes its own history – not merely by giving different answers to the same questions, but by posing entirely different questions.

As an activist in the Pan African movement for over fifty years, Thompson was in a position to raise new questions to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas that shaped the decolonization process. The despair and self doubt which have fallen on many in the aftermath of the cold war require critical reflection. Unfortunately, this is a weak aspect of the book.

*From Kingston to Kenya* captures an important period of the history of rebellion and self-definition by Africans at home and abroad. In this period of recolonization of Africa, it can inspire African youths to demonstrate that it is still possible to carry forward the struggles for self-emancipation, to break with the cultural and spiritual values of Europe. The contradictions of nationalism emanated from the internalization of the principles of the Western nation state. In his own career, Dudley Thompson demonstrated that only internationalism and militant Pan Africanism can be the basis of the emancipation of Africans. In this sense, he made a profound break with the Jamaican middle class.

*The Lotus and the Dagger: The Capildeo Speeches (1957-1994)*. SAMAROO SIEWAH (ed.). Port of Spain: Chakra Publishing House, 1994. 811 pp. (Paper US\$ 15.00)

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Members of the Capildeo family have already been featured in Anthony de Verteuil's *Eight East Indian Immigrants* (1989), Ivor Oxaal's *Black Intellectuals and the Dilemma of Race and Class in Trinidad* (1982), and V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas* (1962). Samaroo Siewah's book traces the epic saga of the Capildeo ancestry from the time Pundit Capil-

deo departed from India in 1894 during indentureship to the incumbent Senator Surendranath.

*The Lotus and the Dagger* is not a mere compilation of speeches. It is embellished with maps, a family tree, photographs (some in color), introductions to each of the speeches, interviews with contemporaries of the Capildeos, and a very extensive appendix. The interviews and appendix (244 pages) could have been a book on their own. This is a strength as well as a weakness, since it makes the book very bulky. Siewah was no doubt motivated by a wish to make his coverage of the Capildeo clan encyclopaedic and also to demonstrate the greatness of Simbhoonath, Rudranath, and Surendranath at an international scale.

Siewah did extensive research to unearth material published on and by the Capildeos in daily newspapers dating as far back as 1964. A *chowtal* poem entitled "Return of Dr. Capildeo," composed by an Indian indentured immigrant laborer, Chotkanlall, and celebrating the victory of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) over the People's National Movement (PNM) in the 1958 Federal Election, is reproduced; Dr. Rudranath Capildeo was later asked to lead the DLP.

In 1939 at the age of nineteen, Rudranath Capildeo won Trinidad and Tobago's Island Scholarship in Mathematics. Addison-Wesley of London published his *Vector Algebra and Mechanics: Theory, Problems and Solutions* in 1968 and it was used in many countries by students in mathematics, science, and engineering. In 1969 he was the first recipient of the nation's Trinity Cross. During his youth Dr. Capildeo was dubbed by his contemporaries as "Trinidad's Most Educated Man." In the late 1940s he suggested that a local university should be established in Trinidad and that a tunnel should be blasted through the Northern Range to Maracas. His political opponents branded him "The Mad Scientist." Capildeo lectured at University College, London, where he became known for his discussions on the Theory of Relativity, Einstein's critique of Newtonian Physics, the prior notion of Kant, and the idealism of Plato.

Siewah's book also gives us many new insights into the world of politics, religion, and literature in Trinidad. We learn from an interview with Senator Capildeo, for instance, that Louis Street in Woodbrook was the setting for the story on which Naipaul's *Miguel Street* (1957) was based. And that politician Surujpat Harbans of *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) was really based on Simbhoonath Capildeo during his campaign in the 1956 general elections.

Women recede into the background of the Capildeo epic drama but they are not passive and silent. Kallawati Capildeo-Permanand, sister of Simbhoonath and Rudranath, was the first woman senator of Trinidad and

Tobago. Her appointment was recommended by her brothers and she served on the DLP opposition benches from 1966 to 1971. Soogee Capildeo (Mrs. Tulsi of *A House for Mr Biswas*) was a matriarch of the Capildeo clan; she was a single parent of twelve children at the Lion House in Chaguanas.

One of the youngest Capildeo family members is overlooked in the discussions – Neil Bissoondath, author of *Digging up the Mountains* (1985) and *A Casual Brutality* (1988). He was born in Trinidad in 1955 and migrated to Toronto in 1973, where he now pursues a full-time career in writing. His works, which have won international acclaim, are yet to be used in the schools in Trinidad.

*The Lotus and the Dagger* fills a gap left by works like Therese Mills's *Great West Indians* (1973) and Anthony Mark Jones's *Caribbean Men* (1984), which have either marginalized or omitted altogether the varied contributions of East Indian heroes and heroines in the region. It should inspire writers to document the biographies of other Indian men and women who have often been denied recognition by the Afro-dominated governments in Trinidad.

*Forty Years of Steel: An Annotated Discography of Steel Band and Pan Recordings, 1951-1991.* JEFFREY THOMAS (comp.). Westport CT: Greenwood, 1992. xxxii + 307 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.90)

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Discography has long been the unwanted child of academic scholarship. An important discographer, discounting his lifelong dedication to the field, once told me that discography is "just a list" of recordings focused on some topic, nothing more. "Just a list," he said, like a list of vegetables to be bought in a morning's run to the market or a list of things to do. In the early days discographers all seemed to be geeky old men with hair growing from their ears. They hung out in creepy cellars combing through ancient 78 rpm recordings hoping to find a blues or jazz record that had not yet been documented. Once found, it was added to "the list." The brightest among them researched record company files and hounded surviving recording artists from some distant era. Justifiably, real academics

didn't want to have anything to do with such a scruffy bunch of oddballs. Even today, most academics, including some ethnomusicologists and anthropologists, in their blissful ignorance, dismiss discography as a charming excess of record collectors, the moral equivalent of the archaeologist's pot hunter or the antiquarian's collector of curiosities. But discography has changed. Today, within archives in some of the stodgiest private universities, there are honored discographers of both sexes happily compiling their "lists."

There is a lot of valuable work going on with respect to the discography of music from the English-speaking islands of the Lesser Antilles. The first work in the field is the West Indian section in Volume 5 of Richard K. Spottswood's (1990:2887-2923) massive *Ethnic Music on Records*. This discography contains only those West Indian records that were recorded in the United States between 1912 and 1942. Spottswood's complete discography, which also includes recordings made in Trinidad and England during the same period, has not been published. Then there is the Richard Noblett and John Crowley discography-in-progress of West Indian records from 1943 to the mid-1960s. And Ray Funk of Fairbanks, Alaska, has recently started a discography of soca recordings. Jeff Thomas's work, therefore, is only the second published discography of the music that originates in and around Trinidad.

A really nice feature of *Forty Years of Steel* is the preface and the many appendices. The preface briefly traces the history of recordings of steel bands – it is the best overview published on these early records that this reviewer has seen and it is a useful supplement to conventional histories of pan (Goddard 1991, Stuempfle 1990, Thomas 1990). But Thomas does overlook the tapes made by John Bessor of the Woodblock Invaders Steel Orchestra at Invader's Calypso Club in Port of Spain in 1950, possibly the first recording made of a full pan band using the 55-gallon oil drums (CD accompanying Hill 1993). He nicely discusses the significance of the Trinidad All Percussion Steel Orchestra or TASPO, a group of all-star pan men who were sent to England and France in 1950, an event that essentially put pan on the world stage. But in the discographical section, he missed the "Danceland" recording of "Coolie Man's House Afire" and "Go Away Gal" (DL0012), possibly the first TASPO recordings.

Although its strengths outweigh its weaknesses, there are a few problems in the way Thomas has gone about structuring his discography. It differs from classic discographies in that there's no attempt to list the major pan men individually, except if they are featured soloists or are mentioned on the albums as leaders of the various groups. This would be an exceedingly difficult task but worth undertaking; it is the reason that discography

is such painstaking work.

Another problem is that Thomas does not list unissued records. It appears that he gathered his information directly from the recordings themselves and from a few contemporary record companies' lists of issued recordings, not from record company files or from the performers. (He does thank many performers in his acknowledgments, but it is not clear that he conferred with them concerning the recordings.) Furthermore, he lists the album numbers, not matrix numbers. But matrix numbers tell us when recordings were actually made while album numbers only tell us when they were issued. Thomas does not tell us some format information of recordings he lists (78 rpm records, 45 rpm records), but tells us the dominant format information (LP, cassette tape, CD). The discography does not include private recordings, nor does it include non-commercial field recordings that may be deposited in archives. Nor are there any listings of "air checks," tape recordings made by private individuals of over-the-air radio broadcasts. Nor are there listings of steel band performances found on video tape. It is true that discographers are only now beginning to get into some of these issues but for an anthropologist all this ancillary information is key to putting the music in a cultural context. Thomas is a musician, a pan man, not an anthropologist or a professional discographer. These assets and drawbacks are quite apparent in that he focuses on the music itself, not so much the documentable trail of the recordings.

Appendix I is a list of record manufacturers and distributors of steel band recordings. Appendix II is a list of calypsonians who have accompanied pans. Appendix III is source information – mostly a list of small record companies and distributors. Index I consists of a list of performing artists, all pan soloists, and steel orchestras mentioned in the discography. Index II is a list of arrangers, conductors, and musical directors. Index III ("Titles") is a list of album names given in the discography. Index IV ("Years"), a very useful index, consists of all named groups and performers, listed by year of issue of the recordings. The last index is a list of compositions or song titles found in the discography.

This discography is worth having, especially for its broad compilation of steel band LPs from a wide variety of sources. Too bad the price is so high, but that is the price to pay for Greenwood's excellent work in publishing so many discographies.

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*Société et modernité: Essai d'interprétation de la société martiniquaise*.  
ANDRÉ LUCRÈCE. Case Pilote, Martinique: Editions de l'Autre Mer, 1994.  
188 pp. (Paper 98 FF)

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While some local critics of *Société et modernité* lamented that they themselves could have written such "banal observations," one supporter argued that its detractors' jealousy bordered on an attack against the already delicate sense of Martiniquan cultural identity (Norvat 1994). The debate is a potent indicator of the very real politics of knowledge production in a society struggling to formulate a sense of identity in the face of French and capitalist hegemony.

This series of essays appeared in April 1994, soon after rioting youth looted and burned several Fort-de-France businesses. In the weeks that followed, stunned intellectuals and educators, including André Lucrèce, reflected on youth unemployment, increasing drug related crime, overconsumption, and the "breakdown of family values." Lucrèce is to be congratulated on his up-to-date look at the urban, consumerist, mediatized Martinique; on his tentative, interpretive approach to it, and on his consistent refusal to be drawn into the island's ubiquitous and abstract

Négritude/Créolité debates. However, while some of Lucrèce's observations are fresh and curious, many others reproduce popular fears and myths rather than analyzing them.

The backbone of this series of essays is the notion of a continuum from archaic society to modern society, the two coexisting today. Lucrèce's archaic society dates to the plantation period and is characterized by the ruse of *marronage*, survival while fleeing, the art of deception in the face of colonial violence. Modern society is characterized by Ninja turtles, crack, official bureaucracy, and all transformation leading to Durkheimian anomie. He sees Martiniquans as oscillating between primordial collective identity and alterity. The coexistence of the two systems thus accounts, say, for the use of magico-religious practices alongside modern medicine.

Lucrèce argues that modern Martiniquan practices can be attributed to a historical mode of resistance. For example, he argues that local attempts to maximize French welfare benefits are the ruses of modern day *marronage*. Even if we overlook the shaky historical evidence for *marronage* in Martinique and accept the metaphorical value of the term, practices of bureaucratic evasion are highly developed among the French who could be said to have perfected the art. He further complicates the issue by offering the common anti-welfare argument that single Martiniquan mothers employ the ruse by getting pregnant, receiving single parent allowances while simultaneously enjoying the benefits of their man's salary. This argument has been disproved by Arlette Gautier (1994) and Huguette Dagenais (1993), who show that most mothers have only two children and the spacing of the births does not correspond to the three and half years necessary to maximize benefits.

Lucrèce also argues that incest is sometimes related to magico-religious practices or to uncontrolled bodily impulses, and that this is an example of the failure to integrate modernity's hallmark control of the body. Though sensationally mediatized, there is evidence that Martiniquan incest rates are comparable to metropolitan rates. In the majority of cases, perpetrators threaten to kill their victims, confirming a well-integrated sense of the forbidden and its consequences. Such behaviors might better be analyzed in terms of patriarchy than used to argue for a collective identity whose unquestioned gender assumptions are unfair to both women and men.

The above arguments, even if misleading and poorly researched, may qualify as interesting, but others do indeed verge on the "banal." Lucrèce argues that women's liberation has led to a loss of communication between the sexes and consequently to homosexuality and avoidance behavior, both described as frightening and regrettable. Lucrèce advises that women who notice their husbands playing dominos more than usual with

their buddies should ask themselves about the communication breakdown in their relationship. His argument then astonishingly veers off to a discussion of mental illness, presumably the result of distance and antagonism between men and women. These overblown conclusions ironically prove the contrary: that there has been very little feminist pressure in Martinique, least of all in the male intellectual circles that continually ignore women's voices and speak "for" them instead.

In his discussion of youth culture Lucrèce examines the riots at which youth expressed material exclusion and demanded employment. Their voices contradict Lucrèce's arguments that Martinique has become a culture of welfare in which the value of work has disappeared. He goes on to use a classical model of adolescent pathology and deviance to explain the riots. He ignores the inequalities of welfare and employment politics that are the keys to Martinique's always problematic relation to the French state. Thus he reproduces the same disengaged sociological response to youth that so many have denounced as the failure of adults to listen to them.

While these essays provide interesting tidbits such as statistics on automobile purchases and changes in the social space of public housing projects, the arguments are often misplaced and ultimately unsatisfying. As an avid observer and fan of Martinique, I wanted very much to like the book, but the poor handling of fascinating material is a disappointment.

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*Gaama Duumi, Buta Gaama: Overlijden en opvolging van Aboikoni, grootopperhoofd van de Saramaka bosnegers.* BEN SCHOLTENS, GLORIA WEKKER, LADDY VAN PUTTEN & STANLEY DIEKO. Paramaribo: Afdeling Cultuurstudies/Minov; Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1992. 204 pp. (Cloth n.p.)

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Among the Saramaka, one of six tribes of Bush Negroes or Maroons, descendants of runaway African slaves in Suriname, *Gaama Duumi* means "the *gaama* [paramount chief] sleeps." Forever. *Buta Gaama* means installing his successor.

Aboikoni, eleventh *gaama* of the 24,000 Saramaka, died January 18, 1989. Born circa 1890, he became *gaama* in 1950. His rule thus coincided with the end of cultural isolation for Suriname's black tribes.

In the 1960s, the Saramaka lost half their territory to the giant hydro-electric reservoir built to provide energy for Alcoa Aluminium. Brokopondo inundated thirty-four villages, forcing 6,000 people to relocate. In 1975, Suriname accepted independence from the Netherlands and began a brief experiment with ethnic democracy. Aboikoni saw little gain: "If I were only a few years younger, I'd lead my people across the Marowijne" [into French Guiana] (p. 55). In 1980, a revolution by sixteen sergeants replaced the government. In 1986, war broke out between the National Army and the Jungle Commando. Peace did not return while Aboikoni breathed.

Throughout his reign as *gaama*, the pace and scope of contact with coastal people kept increasing. Medical services and transportation improved; modernization brought mission schools and rural electrification and consumerism. Traditional authority weakened. Many Saramakas chose to live outside the tribal territory.

Aboikoni was acknowledged first among equals by the other paramount chiefs. His funeral drew representatives from four of the other tribes (the Kwinti's absence is unexplained), the government and the Jungle Commando in uneasy truce, and our four authors.

*Gaama Duumi, Buta Gaama* is a sumptuously produced book – 21.5 x 30.5 x 2 cm, with many, often informative, photographs. It contains five chapters, a very good eleven-page English summary, twelve pages of footnotes, three appendices, and a four-page bibliography.

Chapter 1 provides a brief general introduction to the tribe's history, matrilineal kinship structures, and governance.

Chapter 2 is biographical. Aboikoni's early life was unremarkable for a Saramaka: raised by an older sister, he worked on the river in French Guiana, married a number of times, sailed three years on a Brazilian freighter, and returned to his homeland in his thirties. Somehow he became heir apparent to the Saramaka *gaama*. Installed in 1950, he involved himself in national politics and traveled widely, in 1970 to Africa.

Chapter 3 details the rituals associated with preparing the corpse, mourning, and burial. It sketches for comparison the 1991 funeral of Paramaka Gaama Forster. Aboikoni's unembalmed corpse was kept above ground for three months, but the book reports none of the funerary concerns traditionally addressed then: who or what killed him? Who succeeds? Were interrogations held while the authors were absent or have these traits fallen out of fashion?

Considering a *gaama*'s need to control Christianity's effects on his people's acculturation, it would have been useful to know something of Aboikoni's own religious perspective. The book asserts that Aboikoni was almost certainly baptized Roman Catholic (p. 41), but a footnote to that claim states that the Church's archives do not support it, and that his District Commissioner stated Aboikoni belonged to neither the Catholic nor the Moravian Church.

Chapter 4 describes the more sparsely attended Conclusion of Mourning celebration, nineteen months after Aboikoni's funeral. It was remarkable chiefly for its decorousness.

Chapter 5 reviews the history of Saramaka *gamaa* from 1758, limiting itself to painstakingly describing observable aspects of the transmission of authority to a new paramount chief, Songo.

As trait-lists or word-pictures, these vivid, detailed descriptions succeed. They do not, however, convey the political significance of these rites of passage. Because headmen are appointed for life, their funerals trigger official searches for their replacements. The loyalties and attitudes of a new *gaama* intersect with secular and religious interests at every turn; *Buta Gaama*'s importance is equivalent to that of a presidential election.

Throughout these societies, the righteous dead are believed to be all-knowing, and their advice is avidly sought. The traditional use of the corpse as an oracle requires two men to carry it on their heads, strapped to a plank draped with cloths. Interrogators pose questions designed to be answered yes or no. For yes, the spirit of the deceased forces the heads of the bearers forward; for no, backward. Nowadays the cloths sometimes cover only an *obia* made from the deceased's nail-trimmings and hair.

Interrogation of a carry-oracle may go on for months, illuminating the strains, the shifting power relations, and the evolving values of the society. Oracularity restructures or reaffirms political affiliations, rededicates or modifies perspectives, directs change. But this book reports on not a single session. Songo, a coast-dwelling kinsman, was chosen to succeed Aboikoni. The new *gaama* "has not been baptized but he 'acts as if' he were Christian" (p. 132). Unsurprisingly, he favors development of the interior without losing traditional culture. According to his own account, Songo had expected the office to go to Otjutju, Abatili, or Mombebuka (p. 131). So what political and ecclesiastic purposes did his elevation serve?

*Gaama Duumi*, *Buta Gaama* remains disappointingly silent on all these matters.

*Sranan: Cultuur in Suriname*. CHANDRA VAN BINNENDIJK & PAUL FABER (eds.). Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen/Rotterdam: Museum voor Volkenkunde, 1992. 159 pp. (Paper NLG 45.00)

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How long does it take for a European metropole to appreciate the culture of its (former) colony? Judging from the case of the Netherlands and Suriname, more than three hundred years. In the Netherlands, Suriname is unknown. The fact that Suriname has been a colony for so long and that at present approximately one third of its population is living in the Netherlands hasn't changed much. I am convinced that the majority of the Dutch population couldn't find Suriname on the map. Prominent Dutch newspapers have apparently not noticed that Suriname became independent in 1975, since they still print news about that country on the home pages. Suriname cuisine, in all its delicious varieties, has failed to find its way to Dutch stomachs. Suriname is unloved as well; in the Dutch mind most associations with that country are negative – drugs, poverty, decay, and mismanagement, to name but a few examples.

Individuals in the Netherlands are often surprised when they hear that Suriname is a multi-cultural society; they know about the Creoles (Afro-Surinamers) and maybe Maroons, but British Indians, Javanese, Amerindians, and Chinese too? Somebody once told me that he had met a man

"who said he was from Suriname, but he must have made a mistake because he looked Indonesian to me."

High time, then, to do something about the situation. In 1992-93, the Ethnological Museum (Museum voor Volkenkunde) in Rotterdam presented an exhibit on Suriname culture. Mrs. Liesbeth Venetiaan-Vanenburg, wife of the president of Suriname, opened it – certainly not a bad move as far as publicity was concerned. The exhibit showed pictures, clothing, utensils, art, and videos depicting life in Suriname. The layout and design were rather traditional, consigning each population group to its own niche, but given the objective and intended audience this might have been the best option. Did the exhibition help to make Suriname less unknown? The museum spokeswoman stated that almost 46,000 people saw the exhibit. She was satisfied with this figure, but disappointed that so few Dutch people came; the majority of the visitors were Surinamers, who were generally pleased with the museum's efforts.

*Sranan: Cultuur in Suriname* is the exhibition catalogue published by the Ethnological Museum in collaboration with the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam and the Suriname Museum in Paramaribo. It is an attractive, colorful book including some eighty black-and-white photographs and fifty color plates, mostly by Roy Tjin. Eighteen authors, the great majority of them Surinamers, contributed short introductory essays on Amerindian, Maroon, British Indian, Javanese, Creole, Chinese, Jewish, Dutch (Boeroe) and Lebanese culture; Paramaribo; architecture; music and dance; theater; languages; literature; visual arts; and, finally, religions. The one topic I missed is cuisine represented only by William Man A Hing's discussion of Chinese cookery.

Some authors are more critical than others. Sharda Ganga's essay on theater stresses the talent and enthusiasm in Suriname and glosses over the fact that theater groups lack professionalism. Michiel van Kempen on the other hand states bluntly that "overproduction of mediocre literary publications" has been detrimental to the interest in literature (p. 135). Not surprisingly, in this attempt to capture all of Suriname's culture some topics come off badly. The topical bibliography is too short to be maximally helpful to readers wishing to explore particular subjects in greater depth.

To Surinamists, the book won't offer anything new. As an overview of a rich topic, this catalogue has both the merits and the flaws of its genre. No single issue is explored in depth, but readers gain a broad picture. Hopefully (Dutch) people who did not visit the exhibit will grab this second chance to learn something about Suriname. But I'm not optimistic.

*Grepen uit de Surinaamse rechtshistorie.* A.J.A. QUINTUS BOSZ. Paramaribo: Vaco, 1993. 176 pp. (Paper n.p.)

*Strijd om grond in Suriname: Verkenning van het probleem van de grondenrechten van Indianen en Bosnegers.* IRVIN KANHAI & JOYCE NELSON (eds.). Paramaribo, 1993. 200 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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These two books should not be ignored by anyone who wants to be up-to-date about Suriname land law. The most recent monograph dealing with the subject, Quintus Bosz's monumental Ph.D. thesis, dates back to 1954. After almost forty years, new materials are highly welcome. *Grepen uit de Surinaamse rechtshistorie* is a collection of articles which were originally published in the period 1960-82, mostly in the *Surinaams Juristenblad*. The essays collected by Irvin Kanhai and Joyce Nelson are the result of a research project aimed at drawing attention to the traditional land rights of Maroons and Amerindians.

The Quintus Bosz volume opens with an exercise in political philosophy, in which the concept of freedom as a legacy of the French Revolution came to the forefront on the eve of Suriname's independence. The next three chapters are particularly useful for historians. An essay on Suriname's constitutional history is presented to stress the tradition of representative government. Then the spotlight is directed, in turn, toward the legal position of slaves and the phenomenon of credit in the plantation economies. Today these three essays can be seen as a prelude to many historical studies later published in the Netherlands.

Chapters 5-12 examine Suriname land law. Chapter 5 discusses the introduction of a Civil Code in 1869 and the transition to a new legal system. Quintus Bosz argues that the transition has never been completed in the field of land law and the new definition of ownership in the Code never worked out in practice. The so-called principle of colonial domain had created a colonial authority that was, for all intents and purposes, the ultimate landholder. That authority continued to grant land to farmers on the same terms as before the introduction of the Civil Code. Thus, plots allocated by the government were to be seen as special "West Indian" properties instead of "Code" properties.

Quintus Bosz shows himself to be a creative legal thinker. He places

Suriname traffic law in the context of the duty of "West Indian" owners to provide connections with their plantations in the wilderness (Chapter 6). In a similar way, he views obligations to tolerate certain activities of neighbors in urban zones in terms of governmental policies of land allocation, while he does not mention possibly applicable regulations of the Civil Code providing land users more freedom than governmental allocation conditions.

Quintus Bosz seems to advocate a pragmatic use of power by the holders of the colonial domain. He considers reasonable the relocation of traditional (Saramaka) villages in the interior in order to construct a hydro-electric dam for electricity supply, provided fair compensation is given to the inhabitants (Chapter 8). He describes in detail experiments on a colonial Indonesian model with villages acting as land holders for their peasant inhabitants (Chapter 9). He sympathizes with the government which, as holder of the colonial domain, cooperates in the transfer of land from a testator to his illegitimate heirs (Chapter 11).

The legal position of leaseholding farmers is a cause for concern to Quintus Bosz. Landlords are unwilling to contract with tenant farmers in possible future urbanized zones since, as land becomes a valuable asset, they prefer being completely free to sell (Chapter 10). The most pressing concern for Quintus Bosz must have been that a new generation of Suriname jurists sees the concept of "West Indian" property as outdated (Chapter 12). In my view, this new generation is realistic. Even today, the government seems unable or unwilling to enforce the obligations which made the "West Indian property" so special. In practice the notion of freehold of land as originating from the Code has replaced the idea that the government should enforce the fulfilment of "West Indian duties."

The writings in Kanhai and Nelson's volume are more superficial than Quintus Bosz's. Nevertheless, informative supplementary materials are presented concerning the legal situation of land tenure and the exploitation of natural resources in the interior of Suriname. Kanhai and Nelson are persuasive in arguing that Suriname legislation does not favor the interests of Indians and Maroons. Nelson shows how the government has considered the land in the interior as a colonial domain without offering solid legal land titles to the inland tribes (Chapter 2). Kanhai adds that the terms for concessions for the exploitation of natural resources actually give concession-holders freedom to harm the living conditions of inland tribes (Chapters 3, 6 [co-authored by Mathilde Molendijk], and 10).

Joop Vernooij presents a literary essay about the mystical bond between aboriginal Surinamers and their land (Chapter 7). Interesting as it may be, his contribution is, from a legal point of view, more picturesque

than informative. André Hoekema stresses themes that are in the forefront of the concerns of legal anthropologists (Chapters 1, 8, 9). Some legal anthropologists hold that inalienable communal land ownership is the only instrument for economic development without capitalism, while it is at the same time advantageous to the interests of women (Chapter 9). Consequently, Hoekema advocates patronizing autonomous landholding tribes in order to prevent alienation of tribal lands to outsiders (pp. 174, 175).

Evidently, an appeal to experiences from other developing countries is in order. Yet, more materials are needed for Hoekema to speak about views that should be applicable "worldwide" (p. 167). The presentation of statistical materials could be a next step for Hoekema to convince his readers, who could benefit from an overview of the variables that have to do with collective landholding, such as type of soil, type of agriculture, market perspectives, communication channels with consumers, etc. These variables would enable him to place the question of collective landholding in the context of Suriname particularities. This would provide the necessary background information for a persuasive plea for tribal landholding.

To my mind, the emphasis on "traditional" versus "modern" landholding shifts attention away from the most pressing concern. Until recently the Suriname interior was a sparsely populated area, characterized mostly by subsistence farming that put little pressure on natural resources. One understands why commercial forestry has long been forbidden to indigenous tribes (see also p. 18). For today, the direct challenge is to prevent foreign firms from practicing commercial forestry and gold-mining that would exhaust natural resources in the interior. One wonders if the proposed tribal landholding would encourage foreign firms to focus on the manipulation of indigenous leaders instead of politicians in Paramaribo.

Like Hoekema, I am concerned about a rapid commercial over-exploitation of the resources in Suriname's interior. In my view, two things are urgent. On the one hand, forces in Suriname which are in favor of protecting the Suriname interior need practical legal advice on how to establish a cooperative to get preferential treatment in governmental land allocations and how to use the law of torts which gives more protection than legislative texts, against an external concession-holder harming a local community. If only because of publicity, a lawsuit can be effective. On the other hand, political forces in the Western world, especially in the Netherlands, should consider how development aid could offset foreign capital endangering the Suriname interior.

*De geschiedenis van twee landen: De Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba.*  
J. HARTOG. Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 1993. 183 pp. (Cloth NLG 29.90)

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With this publication eighty-two year old Johannes Hartog has written his umpteenth book on the history of the Netherlands Antilles. A Dutchman by birth, Hartog settled on Curaçao as a journalist after World War II. During the 1950s he worked in Aruba as a librarian. For the past fifteen years he has been retired and living in Salzburg, Austria.

Hartog has written dozens of articles and books on the history, the press, and the libraries of the six islands of the Netherlands Antilles (the first in 1948), each focusing on a particular island. This is the first time he has written a general history of this former Dutch colony.

The book, which is aimed at Dutch readers not familiar with the subject, is an attractive publication – well-balanced and agreeable in its spacing, which makes it eminently readable. The text is punctuated at regular intervals with interesting black and white photos, which give us a clear picture of past economic activities, architecture, and important historic figures. The illustrations provide a helpful visual component, especially for readers who do not know much about the islands.

The book is composed of sixteen chapters divided into two parts, the first of which (pp. 9-143) describes the history of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba from prehistory until the present. In the second part, Hartog completes his earlier *Historische bibliografie* of the Netherlands Antilles (pp. 144-77). Post-1980 history publications are mentioned in alphabetical order, and there are maps and alphabetical indexes of persons and subjects. All this is very useful for specialists and researchers, but one might ask whether such completeness is appropriate in a publication aimed at general readers. Hartog, a sound historian influenced by the stream of historicism, prefers to concentrate on recounting facts, describing historic figures, and narrating events rather than engaging in a critical analysis of processes and structures. Much of his work is based on chronological survey. The sixteen chapters tell us of the first Indians, the discovery, the Spanish period, Dutch colonization, the slave trade, international relations, the oil industry, Aruba's political wishes, the splitting up of the Antilles, and the current situation.



The last two chapters are particularly insightful in relating the historical background to current political, societal, and cultural realities in the six islands. But even here, documentation and description dominate and little attention is paid to the analysis of historical processes and structures. The discussion lacks an historical interpretation of the centrifugal forces exercised on the consecutive governments of the main island of Curaçao. Insufficient light is also shed on societal and cultural diversity among the islands.

Although the author draws on some recent literature, it is clear that he is not abreast of the contents of certain newly published monographs. In spite of studies on the Dutch slave trade by Pieter Emmer and Johannes Postma, Hartog still maintains that most Antillean slaves came from present-day Ghana and neighboring areas. But in fact, although the Gold Coast boasted most Dutch factories and trading stations, Loango and the Slave Coast supplied relatively more slaves for the Dutch Caribbean. If he had studied these particular articles and books he would have been able to supply more adequate information in his discussion of the scope and progress of the slave trade on Curaçao and Statia (pp. 61-64). Hartog raises questions about whether and to what degree slavery was a cruel system, coming to conclusions that are at variance with the discussions of the last few years. His comparison of slaves and free farmers in Europe, which asserts that "Europe's free farmers were certainly worse off than slaves, whose board and clothes were always guaranteed, and who had no fields that were pillaged by wandering soldiers" (p. 63) is certainly off the mark. The group of European free farmers was very diverse. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, free farmers in the Netherlands, northern France, and England were sometimes very prosperous; perhaps Hartog was thinking of tenant farmers and peasants when he made this statement. Nor is it true that soldiers laid waste to fields in the centuries he mentions. His case could have been argued much more effectively if he had been more specific about rights, duties, economic data, treatment of farmers and slaves, and the demographics of free farmers and slaves.

Hartog's book is readable, well-organized, and written from a certain traditional historical viewpoint. It is not a comparative study on structures and processes. We are still waiting for a new generation of (Antillean and Aruban) historians to shine their light on the past of the Caribbean region, analyzing and interpreting it from perspectives that take internal and external processes and structures into account.

*In het schuim van grauwe wolken: Het leven van Cola Debrot tot 1948* J.J. OVERSTEEGEN. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1994. 556 pp. (Paper NLG 49.50)

*Gemunt op wederkeer: Het leven van Cola Debrot vanaf 1948*. J.J. OVERSTEEGEN. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1994. 397 pp. (Paper NLG 49.50)

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Ta quico esaqi ta?

Si bo papia bon di mi,  
Ningun hende ta gabá bo  
pero:

Si bo papia malu di mi,  
Tur hende ta criticá bo.

What's this?

If you talk favorably about me,  
Nobody will praise you

but:

If you talk unfavorably about me  
Everybody will criticize you.\*

(*Voz di Pueblo* [Curaçao], October 15, 1918)

Weeks before Cola Debrot set foot on native soil again in February 1948, the local press discussed the impact the return of this versatile man would have on cultural life in Curaçao. "We do not want to exaggerate," said a correspondent from the Netherlands to the local *Beurs- en Nieuwsberichten* (December 9, 1947), "but in the context of a budding cultural awareness in Curaçao, Debrot is undoubtedly a great man." Especially with reference to the literary development and its critical supervision, the journalist's judgment was sound and surprisingly prescient.

Over the next three decades Debrot (born 1902 in Bonaire, died 1981 in the Netherlands) was to dominate opinion-making in these fields to an extent he had not experienced in the preceding fifteen years as a relatively successful literary author, poet, critic, and essayist in the Netherlands – a country where his name and work are now reduced to a paragraph or two in literary historiography. In the Dutch Antilles, however, both his literary and critical work have gained a canonized status. No serious critical and scholarly study of Dutch Antillean literature can ignore Debrot's literary output and concept of literature, while virtually every student's reading list in secondary schools in the Dutch Antilles is enhanced by one of his works, generally by his debut in prose, *Mijn zuster de negerin* (1934-35).<sup>1</sup>

\*Answer to the riddle: Papiamentu.

Whether or not Oversteegen's biography is welcome at present in the Netherlands (where some doubt was expressed over whether Debrot actually merited a biography), it does contain everything needed for a warm embrace in the Antilles. Indeed, one wishes that Dutch were more widely understood in the Caribbean so the biography could embark on an island-hopping trip through the region. In a two-volume biography of over 950 pages covering a life that took Debrot from the Antilles to many parts of Europe, to the United States, back to the Antilles and the Caribbean, and finally to Holland again, there are bound to be details that remain somewhat unsatisfying or obscure. Oversteegen had to deal with Debrot as a literary author, a politician, a law student, a medical student and practicing general physician, and a figure well versed in the philosophical debates of the pre- and post-war years. Yet, no matter which hat Debrot was wearing, Oversteegen continually impresses by his thorough research and by his careful and intelligent interpretations. Quite in agreement with his aim, which he proclaimed years before the biography appeared (1988), the two-volume publication is first of all the biography of a literary author.

A great part of Debrot's literary work was written during the years he spent in the Netherlands. His contributions to the influential literary magazine *Forum* (1932-35) and his editorship of the literary magazine *Criterium* (1940-42) brought him close to the forefront of literary movements in the Netherlands. However, since Debrot's return to his native islands this literary output has gradually been recognized as forming the beginning of Caribbean literary writing in Dutch and as relatively distinct from the writing of his contemporaries in the Netherlands. Motifs which are considered to be typical of Caribbean writing, such as those of "interethnic relationships," "creolization," "the displaced person," and "personal integrity," are indeed clearly discernible in Debrot's literary production.

Thematically, Debrot is, in both his novels and his poetry, primarily preoccupied with antithetical phenomena, especially those that are ethnic, cultural, philosophical, and epistemological in character. Debrot's delineation and juxtaposition of contrasts highlight rather than obscure any one of these contrasts. The acknowledgment of disparity and divergence is presented as enhancing the very opposites, while the literary text as such, because of its artistic unity, is the only and ultimate means which verbally harmonizes factual contradictions. Consequently, Debrot's literary work reveals meticulously structured poems and narratives. The biography, carried by a style which enthralls me, gives every possible detail about his texts, the process of writing, numerous influences, his literary network, earlier versions and later changes, explicit and implicit (ulterior) motives for writing and publication, intertextual relations, the texts' critical appeal,

diverging interpretations, and more. As a professor of General and Comparative Literature as well as of Dutch Literary History, Oversteegen was able to relate Debrot's work to Dutch literature in general and, at the same time, to show neatly to what extent it diverges from its immediate context. This aspect would make the book particularly attractive to a wider audience interested in the (intertextual) relationship between Western literature and its Caribbean literary "counterpart."

However much Debrot's work is depicted as a product of the Dutch Antilles, it will be up to future research to decide to what extent this Antillean character is related to the Caribbean as a whole. In my view, Debrot's relationship to the Caribbean in general, especially in the early days of his writing career (in the 1930s), is somewhat underexposed. Debrot's lack of interest in the various black American and Caribbean literary movements of those days is too easily explained (away) by stating that so many literary experiments were taking place in Europe (vol. I, p. 153). It is hard to imagine that Debrot did not know about the publication of a special "Negro-issue" of the widely read *De Groene Amsterdammer* (April 19, 1930) in the Netherlands, to which Albert Helman, Debrot's fellow writer from Suriname, contributed. It seems strange for Debrot to have shown so little concern for what others with his cultural background were doing, while writing his successful short novel *Mijn zuster de negerin*. Was he actually so little interested in the literary output he was to hail two decades later and of which we now consider him to be a "forerunner" in the Dutch language? Indeed, with retrospective effect we have turned Debrot into a "Caribbean" author. This phenomenon is interesting enough and not unique to the study of Caribbean literary history; Debrot finds peers in such writers as Saint-John Perse and Jean Rhys.

In my view, Debrot was also less the man to be charmed by the literary writing and the oral tradition in Papiamentu than is suggested in the biography (and generally accepted). Oversteegen gives convincing reasons why Debrot felt "uncomfortable" when writing in Papiamentu, which was more or less his native language. Indeed, Debrot was one of the first to write about the literary output and the literary tradition in the creole language. But while Oversteegen has closely read each and every line of Debrot's output, he seems to have closed his eyes to the very indirect ways in which Debrot showed disapproval of much of what had been produced in Papiamentu. Debrot hid his dislike partly by finding delicate phrasing to discuss the pre-war *romans-à-thèse* in Papiamentu. In an essay on the French author Céline, which has no relation whatsoever with the literary output of his native island (Debrot 1985-89, vol. 5:178-250), he is quite explicit (pp. 212-13) about his aversion to the genre as such. And he

is no less graceful and sympathetic when discussing the oral tradition. However, Debrot's approbation actually only concerns the "authentic" texts, i.e. those that were produced before emancipation in 1863, none of which have survived (see Broek 1995). When weighing Debrot's words against his deeds, Debrot shows himself even more reluctant to carry the torch for the literary tradition in Papiamentu. As an editor of *Antilliaanse Cahiers* (1955-67), he made an impressive contribution to literature from the Dutch Antilles, but he was primarily concerned with the literary output in Dutch and in Spanish. He did not avail himself of the opportunity to promote the oral tradition or the literary output in Papiamentu as he might have. One of Debrot's explicitly stated aims in publishing the literary magazine was to translate Papiamentu texts into Dutch, but the number he actually translated was extremely limited and date mainly from the early 1950s. However fine these few translations are, virtually no further efforts are known. Of course, if one wishes to be successful in the Dutch Antilles, it is wise not to say anything unfavorable about Papiamentu and about its literary output. Debrot knew this only too well, and so does Oversteegen.

However much I felt called upon to point out this aspect of the biography, I nonetheless hope for it to begin its island-hopping trip. It would have to be both translated and adapted (shortened) for a Caribbean-oriented audience. But for such an excellent contribution to the comparative study of Caribbean literature as Oversteegen's biography of Debrot, the existing language barrier is too trivial an obstacle not to be overcome.

#### NOTE

1. This was translated into English and French (Debrot 1958, 1965); the latest edition in Dutch is included in the seven-volume set of his complete works (Debrot 1985-89).

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